NMA 10

ATTENTION
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Editorial

This final issue of NMA magazine is not devoted to any particular theme or topic, but presents in the main a collection of writings submitted to the magazine during the past 12 months. The theme-based editorial of earlier issues has always been something of a necessary evil, providing a focus for generating articles where these would otherwise not exist. It is gratifying then, to see evidence of a greater willingness to write about musical ideas than may have been the case in the past.

In our first editorial, published a decade ago, we drew attention to the diversity of musical thought in this country and pledged to maintain a pluralistic attitude to the presentation of work in these pages. This approach, though not well received in the ideology-driven early eighties, was nevertheless maintained through a policy of guest editorships and an openness to a considerable variety of work. Today, few would question the benefits of a diverse musical culture.

The focus on diversity continues with this current issue. Caroline Wilkins and Andrée Greenwell discuss aspects of their recent music theatre work, in articles that detail some of the broader considerations of stage composition. Sound poetry, or compositional linguistics (call it what you will) is represented by contributions from Chris Mann, Ruark Lewis, and an article by Jas Duke completed shortly before his untimely death in June this year. A number of single-page contributions by Robert Watson, Linda Kouvaras and Chris Mangin highlight - with a degree of humour - some of the more serious questions facing the compositional community today.

An interview with the performance artist Stelarc presents for the first time a description of the sound components of his work, while a major article by Alistair Riddell considers the aesthetics and possibilities of composition with noise. An argument for greater 'orality' in jazz education is put forward by Bruce Johnson, and finally Marie Sorensen discusses aspects of music in therapy.

NMA magazine has always been an under-resourced publication compared to its literary and visual art counterparts, relying for the most part on an annual injection of $1500 from the Victorian Ministry of the Arts. It would not have been possible to produce the magazine without the help of those contributors who gave their time and effort to see the project realised, and the close co operation and patience of the printers who share in a long history of innovative publishing in Australia. It remains to thank those people who continued to support the magazine over the last 10 years.

Finally readers' attention is drawn to the *NMA Prize for Music and Writing* (p.25), established at La Trobe University in the hope that it may act as some small encouragement to composers and musicians to continue writing about their work in the decade to come.

-R.L.

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Victorian Ministry for the Arts.

Arts for Australians
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Two works for solo accordion

Caroline Wilkins

Piece for Accordion and Phonograph[1]

One of my main musical concerns is with the 'play of time', a dialogue between present and past[2]. It is possible for music to travel through time quite freely, by sliding through different contexts and juxtaposing different influences next to each other. To look at what has gone before and see these origins in relation to the present is to observe tradition from a new perspective by removing it from its usual context.

The phonograph, a machine that produces sound by means of a wax cylinder, was invented by Edison in 1877 and is mostly to be seen today in museums. On the other hand the gramophone, which developed later, is to be found relatively often in private collections or in antique shops. The sound reproducer used in **Piece for Accordion and Phonograph** is the gramophone, although the name 'phonograph' is used in the title. This has to do with a personal preference for the word, which comes nearer to its etymological meaning: the sound is 'written', inscribed.

The gramophone evokes memories and confronts us with an unusual recording quality in comparison to present-day recordings. It makes a less refined, very personal and subjective impression on the listener - the essence of the recorded artist is reconstructed in totally different measure. On the other hand the mechanism of the sound reproducer is decidedly audible: the body of the mechanism that lies behind the sound is constantly present.

There are a number of similarities between the gramophone and the accordion:

1. The relationship between their individual mechanisms and sound production: the mechanism through which a sound or tone becomes audible is absolutely present because of its own visible/working process.

2. their connection within the idea of a living 'old sound', meaning their historical role in the kind of music heard at the turn of the century.

In **Piece for Accordion and Phonograph** the role of the gramophone is reduced to producing a mechanical noise (rhythmic element), whilst the accordion produces the sound (pitch element). During the piece a shifting relationship comes into play between these two elements, through which their roles as foreground/background constantly alter. This causes a parallel effect, for the listener, of a shift between past and present, of a connection with the past that is put into a new, present context.

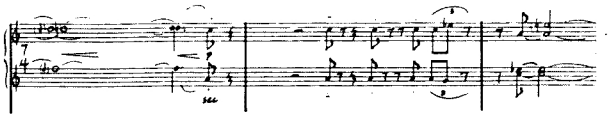
In performance the phonograph and accordion are placed at the same distance from the audience in order to effect an audible and visual balance. As well as the accordionist, the performance requires a phonograph player in order to operate the machine.

A 78rpm record is left playing in the locked groove[3]. Through this means a metrical noise becomes audible, which is accelerated during the course of the work from about 69mm to 92mm by means of the speed lever control, and finally slowed down to about 63mm. It is normally necessary to wind up the gramophone during the piece so that it gradually runs down some time after the accordionist's last note.

At the beginning of the work one hears very high, soft sounds emerging through the wash of gramophone sound, that gradually move into the foreground (example 1).

Example 1

The foreground/background relationship between long, sostenuto sounds - mainly consisting of tone and semitone intervals (pitch structure) - and the mechanical gramophone sound (rhythmic structure), changes constantly through different dynamic nuances of the accordion. This continues until the instrumental sounds gradually disappear in the same pitch register as at the beginning, and the gramophone gradually decelerates finally coming to a halt and leaving behind a curious stillness. the notation of the work is reduced to one stave, though this does not mean that everything is to be played on one keyboard manual only. By dividing the notes between both manuals of the accordion a greater variety of sound possibilities, such as colour and spatial effects, can be produced. This is left largely to the imagination of the player, whereby **Piece for Accordion and Phonograph** can be seen as a study in sound (example 2).



Example 2

Such an approach is suggested by the relative simplicity of the sound and a delicate, fine melodic line within this, demanding a constant tension throughout the piece.

Piece for Accordion and Screens[4]

The relation between performer and instrument has

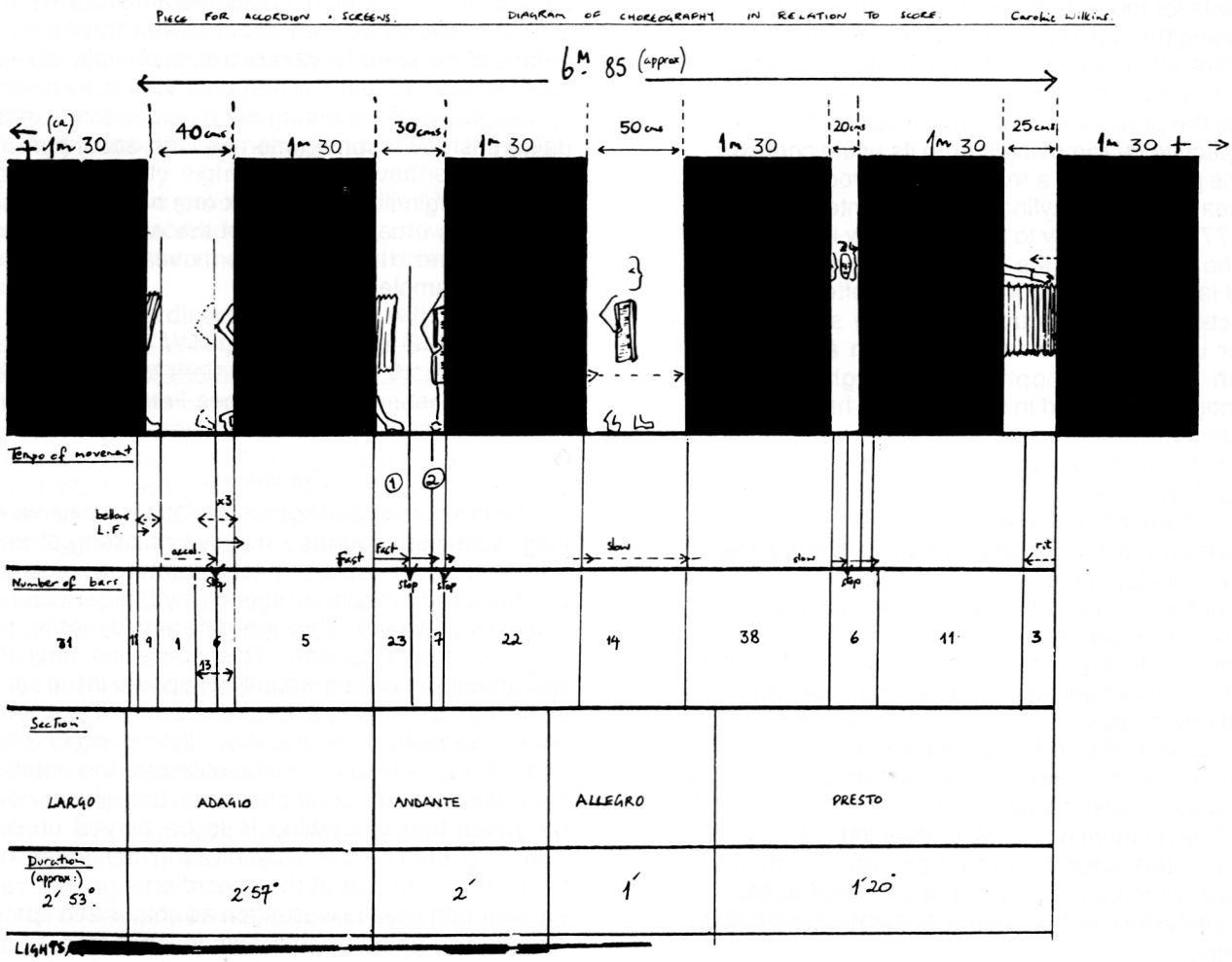
always interested me as a composer. A kind of duality between the animate and the inanimate is present in the movement/stillness, sound/silence that occurs during a performance. It is as if both performer and instrument were constantly shifting between these roles. This is a notion that is particularly valid in the relationship between the sound producing mechanism of the accordion, and its player. For the scenic part of the piece this was the essential starting point: through the movements of the performer on the one hand, and the accordion on the other, a kind of inward tension comes into play. A partial concealing of the performer (his/her presence or absence behind the screens) causes a shift between the animate and inanimate on the scenic side, and increases the tension on other levels.

In **Piece for Accordion and Screens**, as with other works, I was concerned with the mechanism of the instrument itself and with making the sound source audible. By this means the sound-producing process is exteriorised and the body of the instrument, as well as the physical presence of the performer, is consciously evoked.

The subtitle refers to the inner mechanism of the accordion, *vent* meaning an opening that allows the movement of incoming or outgoing air in a restricted space. The scenario can be imagined as a large accordion bellows (i.e. the screens) whilst the player's instrument (the bellows in particular) presents a miniature picture of the whole scenario - a small image that moves through the imaginary 'macro' bellows.

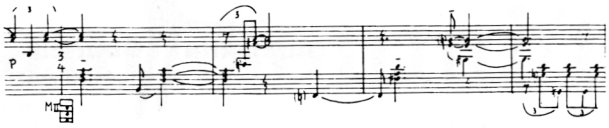
Six screens are placed next to each other in a line at varying distances (example 3). The performer moves behind the screens from one to the next. The bellows' movement can be imagined as leading the direction of the player forwards. With regard to the choreography, only parts of the accordion and performer are visible at any one time between the screens, i.e. foot, elbow, bellows, keyboard, the image of the whole performer and instrument being visible only for a short time. At the beginning of the piece the performer remains unseen. The music begins with the wind sounds of the bellows. High tones, sostenuto and very soft, appear through these wind sounds. The work consists of five movements (Largo - Adagio - Andante - Allegro - Presto) following one another without a break. This structure indicates an acceleration of the tempo in both music and choreography, so that equal balance is maintained between both. However music and choreography keep to their own individual lines, neither falling into the role of background or foreground.

From an audience's point of view only the descant manual (keyboard) or the bellows (later the bass manual) are essentially visible. The two playing sides



Example 3

of the accordion (descant and bass) are set predominantly in opposition, for example in the Adagio section (example 4).

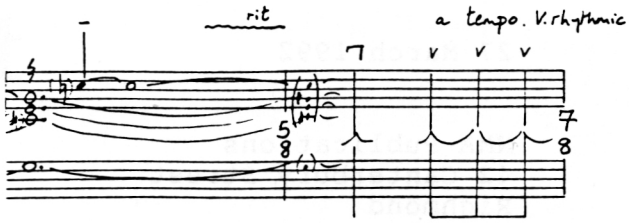


Example 4

At the end of the work different rhythms are juxtaposed at the same time on both playing sides. A conscious indication of the body of the instrument and its sound process leads to the specific appearance of the keyboard, bellows and bass manual as part of the composition. An example of this would be motifs on the keyboard the involve percussion or half-depressed keys sounds. The work begins with a wind sound produced by the bellows, from which the first tone appears. A rhythmic element of the bellows movement is taken up in the Allegro, producing a rhythm on the LH keys that are kept depressed throughout the passage (example 5).

A series of notes in the bass manual reveals itself at the end of the piece as a continuum, that gradually disappears to a percussive sound of the keys only, and is eventually stopped by a noisy, energetic intervention of the RH across the top of the bellows.

The play of a shifting relationship between music and image is an essential aspect of the scenic performance of **Piece for Accordion and Screens**. At the same time, the work can be performed not only as an instrumental theatre piece (although this was the original setting for the work) but also as a concert work without scenario. The music is, in this respect, not dependant on the visual element having, as it were, its own independent expressivity.



Example 5

Footnotes.

1. **Piece for Accordion and Phonograph**, written in Sydney and realised initially as a tape piece, was broadcast in this form on 3MBS in Melbourne in 1987. The first live performance took place at the Frauen-Zeichen-Fest, Cologne, in 1989 and in May 1990 the piece was performed by Udo Auch at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen.
2. Caroline Wilkins, *An Approach to 19th Century Sound.* **NMA5** 1987 p7.
3. The locked groove is the acoustic essence of the gramophone mechanism that brings the physical elements of needle and record, undisguised, to the ear.
4. **Piece for Accordion and Screens** was written in Cologne in 1988 and performed in June of that year at the Musikhochschule by Udo Auch. Further performances followed in Duisburg, Villingen, Gelsenkirchen as well as at the Linden New Music concert series in Melbourne in the form of a video. In 1989 it was broadcast on VPRO radio in Holland and ABCFM Australia. In 1990 the work was performed a the World Music Days, Oslo, by Jostein Stahlheim.

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42 Canterbury Street
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Att: Mr Rainer Linz

Dear Mr Linz,

I am writing concerning your application for assistance towards:

Two issues of NMA Magazine 1992 - publishing costs

I regret to advise that we were unable to support this application.

The Board considered your application and perceived that other applications had stronger claims for assistance from the limited funds at the Board's disposal.

Should you require any further advice, we would be happy to be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Chris J. Mangin
Director
Performing Arts

Sounds, sound poetry, and sound/text compositions

Jas. H. Duke

Sounds

There exists an artform that (like an elephant) is instantly recognisable but (again like an elephant) is difficult to define. This is where a human voice, a remarkably versatile device, is modulated to produce loud sounds, soft sounds, high sounds, low sounds, fast sounds, slow sounds and all sorts of sounds in between. Ever since the dawn of time people have made sounds come from their mouth and nose. Some of these sounds get put in the box marked 'speech' while other get put in the box marked music. Some don't seem to be either and can't find an appropriately labelled box. But when looked at closely our 'speech' and 'music' boxes can be seen to have elastic sides and to have a lust to couple with each other.

Sound Poetry and the Churches Era

'Sound Poetry' as normally defined makes a first appearance in the early 20th century as an outrider of the great army of Modernism. (Of course there were sounds long before that but they needed clothes that convinced listeners that they were really something else). The pernicious nature of the times meant that the Modernists organised themselves rather like secret societies, or political parties, or schismatic christian churches. That is they were small groups of true believers, generally led by some sort of Messiah figure (eg Marinetti, Gumilev, André Breton, Herawath Walden) who constructed a canon of acceptable works, welcomed in right-minded colleagues and collaborators, produced bibles and prayer books for new recruits, denounced false prophets, and excommunicated spies and traitors. In this way Futurists (both 'Italian' and 'Russian' brands), Expressionists ('Germans' and 'others'), Dadaists, Surrealists and their innumerable splinter groups rampaged across culture, throwing up a few sounds of interest in amongst their denunciations of the bourgeoisie and each other. The spirit of the times ensured no co-operation between the various churches. The various messiahs spent as much time claiming that they were "the first" and denouncing the false messiahs of the church next door as actually producing sounds. For instance the Dadaist movement had a very short life as a movement but then Dadaists found a much more satisfying occupation - lasting 40 years or more - in arguing with each other about who had thought up the name "Dada". This religious dissension means that Futurists ignore Surrealists, Expressionists ignore Dadaists, and so on through all the possible permutations and combinations. Historians of Modernism generally have trouble with anything outside narrow fields of reference and find no difficulty in discussing Schwitters while ignoring Stramm, analysing Arp while ignoring Marinetti, and mentioning Heynicke while ignoring Hausmann. Although sound poetry should be able to leap the boundaries of national languages anthologists insist on inserting French sound poets into French language anthologies, Germans into German books, and Americans into books dealing with America.

Sounds and Obsessions

Various obsessions governed the work of leading sound poets of the Churches era. Marinetti (Futurist of Italy) and Heynicke (Expressionist of Germany) became obsessed with war and strove to write works which would reproduce the sounds and emotions of battles. With Marinetti, this took the form of sheets of sound intended to represent artillery shells bursting, machine guns and rifles firing, land mines exploding, cries of the wounded and dying, and the triumphant shouts of the victors. Something like this resulted (examples 1, 2):

Example 1. Marinetti: **Zang Trum Tumb.**

БРУКЛИНСКИЙ МОСТ

Издай, Кули́дж,
радостный клич!
На хорошее
к мне не жалко слов.
От похвал
красней,
как Флага нашего матéрийка,
хоть вы
и разъюнайтед стетс
оф
Америка.
Как в церковь
идет
помешавшийся верующий,
как в скит
удаляется,
строг и прост, —
так я
в вечерней
сереющей мерещи
вхожу,
смиренный, на Бру́клинский мост.
Как в город
в сломанный
прет победитель
на пушках — жерлом
жирафу под рост —
так, пьяный славой,
так жить в аппетите,
влезак,
гордый,

Example 5: Mayakovsky: **Brooklyn Bridge**

The Churches in Ruins

The period of the Modernist Churches died away and, although some of the sound exponents lived for many years afterwards, the decision makers of 'Art' were soon able to brand their work as 'old hat', 'passe' etc, and completely ignore it. This strand of sound poetry soon became only of interest to fussy antiquarians obsessed with splitting ancient hairs. Mayakovsky shot himself dead and his ghost was embraced by Stalin ('he was and is the greatest poet of our Socialist Epoch and indifference to his memory is a crime') which has ensured that his work counts for zilch.

Hitler, the People, and the Tom A. Edison Grab-Bag of Delights

Meanwhile back in the real world non-artists and non-modernists were also producing sounds. Microphones, phonographs, radios, amplified public address systems, motion pictures, advertising jingles and the whole Tom A Edison grab-bag of delights enabled singers and songwriters to forget about **Beautiful Dreamer**, **My Grandfather's Clock**, **The Harp That Once in Tara's Halls**, and similar horrors of the previous generation and write things like *Maisie Doats And Dosie Doats And Little Lambs Eat Ivy*, *I Tawt I Taw A Putty Tat* and *He Thwam And He Thwam All Over The Dam* which exposed 'the People' to something other than rigid forms of convention. Jazzmen, used to blowing down trumpets and saxophones, discovered they could make interesting sounds without the trumpet or the saxophone (listen to Clark Terry's **Mumbles** or Dizzy Gillespie's **Salt Peanuts**). Demagogic politicians like Hitler, found suitably amplified sound poetry highly necessary. Examination of Hitler's speeches will show that many of them consist almost entirely of loaded and coded phrases like *Das Ganze Volk*, *Deutschland* and *Juden Raus* endlessly repeated in the Schwitters manner. After these performances nobody should doubt the ability of sound poetry to inspire millions of listeners. In addition Hitler had powers denied to the various messiahs of Modernism as he could imprison, torture and kill rival artists with impunity and without reprisals. Hitler could also involve the whole German people in his sound poetry by eschewing the passive acquiesence required by previous and subsequent dictators and have his subjects shout *Heil Hitler* every time they opened their mouths.

Wand

Fünf Vier Drei Zwei Eins
Wand
Wand
WAND
WAND WAND WAND
WAND WAND WAND
WAND WAND WAND WAND
wände
wände
Wände
WÄNDE WÄNDE WÄNDE
WÄNDE WÄNDE WÄNDE WÄNDE

WAND WAND WAND
wand wand wand
wand
wand
wand

wand

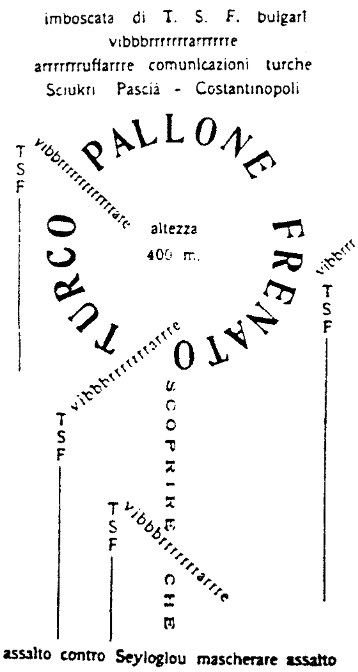
Example 6: Schwitters: **Wand**

A New Breed Makes its Presence Felt

After this convulsion had resolved itself little was left of sound poetry or sound poets. In its place rose another breed of human voice sound, this one deriving from 'new music' (of the North American brand rather than the European) instead of from Modernist language. Its exponents were usually American, had attended some cultural educational establishment, were usually quiet and well-behaved (no wild men this time), were quite well-informed about culture and its place in society, and had a proper respect for good design, wall street, coca cola, the civilising mission of the USA, the hopelessness of socialism, the benefits of business driven technology, and the burning question 'What happened to our simple country virtues?'

The USA and a Paradigm Shift

The USA, being a society of traditions and backward glances over travelled roads, is currently hurtling back into a hi-tech version of the 13th Century. The nobility and gentry are fortifying themselves in castles guarded by paid bodyguards. The universities are in a similar role to that played by medieval monasteries. Sports and television (now closely linked) have taken over from religious festivals. Every now and then crusaders are sent to foreign parts to smite infidels. The phrase *Only in America* is often invoked. Art must conform to this paradigm shift, it must either make itself indispensable to the



Example 2: Marinetti: **Captive Balloon**

Heynicke, although equally a war lover, in contrast went for a single note system and produced works like 'Blood / Mud / Death / Brown Flood Again / Back / Past...' etc (**Attack**). Expressionist sound poetry is characterised by this 'telegraph' style, first used by Stramm and refined by Heynicke. Dadaists liked to think of themselves as 'Wild Men' who had broken all forms of restraint and whose work required a certain amount of randomness, unexpectedness, and chance decisions. However they mostly lacked any real talent for improvisation and fell back on memorised scripts, for example Hugo Ball's **Karawane** (example 3).

Hausmann, a little later in time made a virtue of this and claimed that the typographic style of his 'Phonemes' allowed the reader to instantly recognise what sound was intended (example 4).

Mayakovsky (the Futurist of Russia) wrote 'conventional' rhyming poetry but he was a much more practised, competent, and able reader of his work in public than small scale people like the Dadaists for all their technical innovations. Mayakovsky was called on to perform to much larger audiences (often indifferent to 'art' and potentially hostile), and to perform more often. He developed a method of laying out his work on the page to assist the performer which looked like this (example 5):

The German Kurt Schwitters who existed on the Dadaist fringes (the Dadaist synod denounced him as 'bourgeois') developed a similar method (example 6).

He was also a practised and confident performer, much more interested in performance than in the theory of performance. He was also a painter, a collagist, a constructor of mysterious towers made of everyday objects, an advertising artist, a writer of cryptic little playlets, a lover of puns, and a wearer of doublebreasted chalkstriped suits. Critics on the whole dislike all rounders and prefer Johnny One Notes of Taste and Refinement.

KARAWANE
jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla
grossiga m'pfa habla horem
égiga goramen
higo bloiko russula huju
hollaka hollala
anlogo bung
blago bung
blago bung
bosso fataka
ü üü ü
schampa wulla wussa ólobo
hej tatta gôrem
eschige zunbada
wulubu ssubudu uluw ssubudu
tumba ba- umf
kusagauma
ba - umf

Example 3: Ball: **Karawane**

Others

Of course there were other sound poets of ability around during these times and some of them managed to appeal to wide audiences by the trick of not labelling their sound poetry as 'Art'. For instance Rudyard Kipling managed to write a sound poem (*Boots-Boots- Boots-Boots- Movin' Over Africa, Boots-Boots- Boots- Boots - Moving' Up and Down Again*) which millions of people who regarded modern artists rather like a dangerous species of rattlesnake managed to bellow out with love and devotion while intellectuals cowered back in horror at the vulgarity of it all.

kp'erioUM lp'er ioum
Nm' periii pERnonnn
bpretiBerreeeRREbee
ONNOo gplanpouk
konmpout pERIKOUL
RrEEe.EEee rrrnn..ee.A
oapAerrre EE E
mgled padANou
MTNou tnou- t

Example 4: Hausmann: **Optophonetic poem**

nobility and gentry or get involved in the religious festival business. There thus has to be a certain amount of giving the customer what the customer thinks the customer wants. This differs from the Churches Era where the various messiahs decided that what the customer thought the customer wanted was totally unimportant, what mattered was what the Messiah wanted.

electric guitars, disembodied keyboards and samplers as the people's sound devices. This enabled people's musicians to warble lugubrious and lachrymose songs of love along with amplified chords stolen from ancient bluesmen and gospel singers from lost cotton plantations. Advertising (or giving the customer what they really want) continued to be a major artistic influence. It was also the age of hi-fi and

---

The Economist's Song Jas. H. Duke

Performance instructions:
First read down the columns starting at the left hand top corner. Then read across the columns starting in the same place. Then read up the columns starting at the right hand bottom corner. Then read across the columns starting in the same place. Then read across the columns from the left hand top corner again. Then stop. The last words should be Down the Gurgler, Down the Gurgler, Down the Gurgler. Initially the voice should be that of an 'expert' (one totally in control) but pitch, speed and loudness should gradually rise and the last section should come out pell-mell until the down the gurglers are reached. These should come out in breathy gasps, giving an impression of exhaustion.

Raise Productivity	Cut Taxes	More Competitive
Pursuit of Excellence	Raise Executive Salaries	Cut Wages
Cut Wages	Cut Government Spending	De-regulation
Our Trading Partners	The Balance of Trade	The Current Account
Raise Profits	Cut Taxes	Level Playing Field
Cut Tariffs	Cut Wages	Raise Executive Salaries
We'll Drive The Dollar Through The Floor		
We'll Drive The Dollar Through The Floor		
Raise Productivity	Cut Wages	Cut Welfare
Down the Gurgler	Down the Gurgler	Down The Gurgler

Johnny One Notes of Taste and Refinement

Instead of their speech being the denunciation of the bourgeoisie and rival artists this new breed instead spoke a language of technological fashion, vaguely reminiscent of the fashion pages of Vogue, where the slightest mis-phrasing inexorably identified the washed-up, passé, has-been. True citizens of a land where the poor won't work because they're paid too much while the rich won't work because they're not paid enough. This new breed were not poets so their work was not sound poetry. Instead they produced 'sound/text compositions'. They did not read in the strident vehement manner associated with Marinetti (or Hitler) but in a low key buttoned-down sort of voice, suitable for the titillation of cultured moneybags in search of something new. The Age of Cold Wars and Thermonuclear Devices cultivated restrained works like Charles Amirkhanian's **The Drano Ducks Collide**. A certain gentle satire (often at the expense of the cultured moneybags) is present. To tell the truth denunciations of the bourgeoisie could have remained in fashion, no cultured moneybags wants to be mistaken for a bourgeois. Presentation, a minor concern in the Age of Churches, became important. Critics still preferred Johnny One Notes of Taste and Refinement. In a way this fawning and truckling to cultured moneybags is a throwback to the days of W.A. Mozart when musicians occupied a similar position to grooms, valets and chambermaids.

Real World Developments

Real world sounds still continued to appear although trumpets and saxophones ceased to be people's weapons, they became 'Art', they were replaced by stereo, of wide screens in theatres and small screens in living rooms, T-shirts, hair, recreational drugs, and a certain amount of aggressive and fumbling sex. Morality was determined by accountants and tax lawyers. Image often overpowers sound in people's culture, tailoring triumphs and costume aptness is equated with moral worth. But there was still room for *Be-Bop-A-Luba-Bip-Bam-Bop*, *Spark-A-Lark-A-Lark-A-Ling*, *Safe As Milk*, *Drove My Chevvy to the Levee but the Levee was Dry*, and *1-2-3 What Are We Fighting For?*

The Spirit of Nostalgia and Revivalism

Revivalism and the Spirit of Nostalgia also revived some interesting work in the style of the Churches Era such as The Four Horsemen from Canada - listen to their **Assassin** or **Mayakovsky**. Like most revivalists they are better than the original. Unlike the Churches Era there is more work for women (eg Meredith Monk). Women of the Churches Era were to be seen and not heard.

A Modern Virtuoso

The 1980s did produce a genuine virtuoso, a Paganinni of the Voice, a performer with more talent than Schwitters or Marinetti or Mayakovsky. This is Bobby McFerrin. Like most virtuosi he is as capable of embarrassing and infuriating admirers and potential admirers in that his taste and his abilities often seem on a collision course - he is always liable to halt and give all the credit to Jesus, or break into **Don't Worry Be Happy**. But he has really got it with a capital 'I' and his record **The Voice** is sound poetry as it should be sounded[1]. Listen particularly to **I'm My Own Walkman**. Let's hope that his hit records

give him a good living, without the fawning and truckling to cultured moneybags that artists have to go through in order to survive.

What is to be Done?

Sound Poetry and Sound Text Compositions have never occupied centre stage while they have remained under those labels. Sound Poets (or S/T Compositionists) who got into the spotlight, like Kipling and Hitler, acquired millions of admirers while dressing up sound poetry as The Essential Rightness of British Imperialism or The Historic Mission of the German People to Bash the Jews. Let there be no mistake over their popularity, at one time **Boots** was being declaimed on every music hall stage in the British Empire while at another time the raucous (but powerful) sounds of Hitler shrieked from every German radio set. The sound poetry was noisy and flashy, like the organised violence that these authors saw as the answer to all problems. Audiences stood ready to cheer every statement, no matter what it was, to them Imperialism was good in all its forms, Jew-bashing was good in all its forms. While Hitler was regarded as a mighty elemental force ('mad genius' or 'vulgar little man' are as far as critics want to go in criticism then and now) his gentle contemporary Schwitters was (and is) universally regarded as a weirdo.

So the Sound Poet/Sound Text Compositionist of today who seeks 'fame, recognition and non-wimpishness' needs to tap into some currently popular cause. And what is popular today with decision-making important people? Obviously economics of the modified Adam Smith brand (with A.S's 'enlightened self-interest' being replaced with just plain self-interest). The above sound/Text composition (**The Economist's Song**) is suggested as a sure-fire winner of popularity.

Footnote

1. Bobby McFerrin's record is **The Voice** Elektra Musician 960 366-1 and was recorded at live performances in Germany in March 1984.

Notes on an opera

Andrée Greenwell

...I became excited by Claude Tardat's heroine[1] who became very powerful in her resolve to gorge herself to gigantic proportions, and finally death, on sweets. The story of a woman who savoured every calorie on her journey, who rejoiced in every inch of her bloating body - and the subsequent abhorrence of her family and society contained in a proud and erotic text, suggested to me wonderful material to explore the experience of the heroine within a music-theatre context.

Initially I was interested in exploring broader definitions of the female operatic voice and body within a collage format. It became apparent that if we were to adapt Claude Tardat's central character utilising the human voice, it would be appropriate to locate that voice within a difficult and hierarchical context, in this case, opera. And that we would use this form to allow the voice of our named heroine, Claudia, to grow, abominate, triumph and directly challenge its immediate musical and social restrictions, and implicitly question contemporary practices that endeavour to control our reception of the female voice.

Madonna is so produced she is almost a machine. Madonna occupies a glamour world of distorted spatial/social dimensions. Her worked-out (practiced) body is untouchable, protected by bodyguards in the horizontal public domain, venerated on the stage/altar platform above and distanced from her audience. In this position she claims the most physical mobility and power within the performance space.

The voice within the star's distant body is amplified to omnipotence, projected into the room to caress all surfaces, while the body-source maintains a safe distance.

The distorted relationship between the voice and body presents her as larger than life. Perhaps that is why she moulds her body into something more mechanistic... steely satin lingerie with conical bra cups...

...I often feel like licking the tanned bodies of women on magazine covers, until I feel sick. Then I buy myself some caramel lollipops."

Claude Tardat - **Sweet Death**

Opera and excess. Gluttony. Desire and denial. Desire to consume. Desire to present an image. Desire to attain that image/voice. Denial to attain/maintain that image/voice.Opera is absurd. Opera singing is extraordinary and wonderful. The voice appears to come from a larger source than the human body. Like Madonna, opera singers are mythologised because of the disproportional/fascinating relationship of the voice to body. Perhaps this is the origin of the myth that it is good for an opera singer to be fat - to stabilise that lack of proportion. Claudia is operatic. Claudia bloats her body with food in her desire to be huge and socially abhorrent, antithetical to her mother. Ironically in the process of her beauty abomination she would experience similar bodily malfunctions to those of an anorexic.

"... In the half-light of the almost empty theatre, my chocolate Kim Cone dribbled down my neck onto my skirt in thick, devastating streams. The stifling heat kept me from catching the creamy debris before it stained my clothes with dark, gummy blotches. The precious liquid glued the fabric to my thighs, and I regretted losing out on all that pleasure. Had I been thin and supple, I might have leaned down to lick the spilled chocolate ice cream from my lap. But my tongue is now exiled from the rest of my body. Lifting up my skirt, I wiped off some of the slimy mixture of sugar and sweat and tasted it. The salt from the perspiration spoils the flavour of the chocolate.

Too bad."

Claude Tardat - **Sweet Death**

The more Madonna practises to 'perfect' her body for the images presented to us on television, film and video, the more glamorous, unattainable and desirable within a consumer culture she becomes. Madonna is devoted to the creation of herself as a consumer product. Parts of her are available to be reproduced and marketed for consumers to buy, rent and experience within the public and private domain. Her voice, sampled and panting, can be heard in the privacy of a living room or day-dreaming in the train through headphones directly above your left ear, above your head, then to the right. Panting and singing in simultaneous proximities creating varied illusory spatial dimensions.

In the film Desperately Seeking Susan, **Madonna is re-presented as a parody of herself through the character of Susan. Susan attends a disco to dance to Madonna's music, where the voice calls from outside of the movie's narrative and indicates a relationship to the actor's body as one of simultaneous disembodiment and ownership. As audience we understand the parody and give her the licence to do so - Madonna's voice sings from outside the movie scene and into a "believable" location for the experience of the star's voice - at a disco. In turn when we see the video clip of** Get into the Groove **the role is reversed - we know we are listening to Madonna perform as a pop star accompanied by excerpts of her starring in the film's narrative in which she performs as Susan who is dancing to Madonna at a disco.**

Several layers of performance and vocal presence operate. The dimensions vary according the context of the experience available on do-

mestic video, music-video or cinematic screen. Quadruple existence and no body.

Opera is a cultural phenomenon with it's own system and tradition of role-playing, narrative and character representation, an aggrandised and temporal augmentation of information and drama. The absurd nature of communication in performance permits strange temporal representations, ludicrous plots, it can take minutes for two characters to declare love to each other... an entire act to die... pleasure is taken in the indulgence and attraction of the operatic voice... repetition of text, extended syllables, embellished phrases, a 'held' climax, virtuosity is displayed and often connotes virtue or victory... so many stupid narratives and silly productions are thrown at us, opera season after opera season, and are justified because of the 'beauty' of the voice.

The flat, planed timbre of Kylie Minogue's voice is masked in production by chorus and reverb techniques used literally for cosmetic purposes - the voice is "dressed up" while the body endlessly dresses up in an immense wardrobe of nouveau Bardot and designer costumes. The banality of her voice is forgiven. Her power is in her ability to dress up for us. A pop mannequin that distracts audio attention through the creation of a multitude of glamorous and fast-cutting images. A voice swallowed in layers of slick audio veneer.

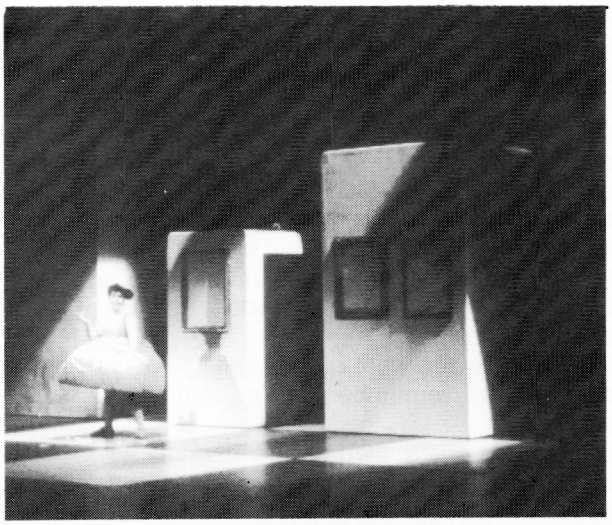
Images of women and their bodies.
Images of singers and their bodies...
Images of operatic heroines, their bodies, their voices, opera singers stereotyped as large - perpetuating the myth that the larger body alters and enhances the physiology of the vocal chords.

Maria Callas' voice.
It's timbre. It's drama. Her articulation. Her vibrato. Her interpretations. Her musical expression in these acts of interpretation. That thick eye liner. As a young dead star her private life became more public... her death circumstance was seized upon and glamourised by the media. Maria can die a heroine's death a thousand times and live again. Death circumstances of female singers that echo or in some way reconstruct the performance worlds they inhabited or sang about - Billie Holliday, Judy Garland, Bessie Smith, Marilyn Monroe, Janis Joplin, Karen Carpenter, Mama Cass Elliot, Maria Pasta - heroine's death scenes creating confusion to what was opera/operatic in their lives.
The grain of Billie Holliday's voice, inflections, phrasing, breaths, text subject, blues, microphone placement, voice placement within the ensemble, recording quality, songs. She rarely sang fast songs.

Divas - Madonna, Nina Hagen, Diamanda Galas, Maggie Thatcher.

The instrument (voice) is within the body, not an external sound-source that has been struggled with by a body that adapts itself to utilise as a means of expression...

"...My neck is swelling, a sponge saturated with



lemonade and strawberry punch. I'm filling myself up, overflowing, spilling out onto the chipped enamel of lavatories; I'm decomposing. I'm infinitely pleased with myself."

"...My bosom is too heavy with accumulated fat, it overflows the sides of scale. The indicator needle, which has probably been screwed up anyway by my attempts to weigh myself, is completely covered by my vast twin pillows."

"...I've eaten nothing but honey for three days now. I'm trying out all sorts of different kinds. I write them down, classify them, move on by a process of elimination. Manuka honey from Australia is the most exquisite of them all. I smear my left hand with it, all the way up to the elbow. I use the whole jar, thanks to the thickness of my arm, which is as swollen as a child's balloon. Luckily my skin is smooth, without a trace of down or hair. The honey spreads easily. It

sticks to the skin. It doesn't dribble the way even the thickest kinds of jams do. Afterward, I lick myself slowly, with the diligence of a cat at its toilette. I don't leave even the slightest trace. My arm is tattooed with purplish suck-marks. Then I go to bed, curling up as much as my figure permits. I drool on the pillow, and it's nice to feel a trickle of sugary warmth flowing from inside of me."

Claude Tardat - **Sweet Death**

an opera, a body, a singer, a voice
an operatic body
the body of an opera
a body of work
a corporate body
a network of voices within the corporate
selective listening
selective editing
some make a lot more noise than others
the body of the singer
an independent body
the voice within a body
the voice within an operatic body
the voice of a singer who hasn't eaten or slept for two nights and has consumed three litres of bourbon
the voice of a singer who has had an argument over breakfast, has shouted, is angry missed the tram, and has had to run to rehearsal
a tired voice
a tired body
a large body
a large body struggling up the stairs
the shallow wheezes of a tired body struggling up the stairs
a struggling tired body with bronchitis, coughing, spitting phlegm
the voice inside that body
the imagined voice within that body
the developing voice within that body
the practice undertaken towards a desired and imagined voice
the gap between what is heard and what is desired
the imagined, remembered voice of the owner of that body
one evokes one's own voice when imagining, contemplating remembering, reflecting or reconstructing scenes
(I need to know very soon who is going to play Claudia so that I can imagine her voice)
the voice within a song
the musicians
the sound world created by the musicians around the body of the singer
the musicians are too loud
the writing is too dense
is the music supporting/in competition with/sympathetic/ironic/appropriate/appropriated
Claude's appropriated voice
the voice outside the body - disembodied
the voice operated by the hands of another at a keyboard
sampled voice
technological bodies
Claude's natural voice together with her appropriated voice
Claudia's amplified voice - effected
the body of technology operated by a human body within an operatic body
of voices and musicians
the voice of the director calling from the back of the theatre to a technician that is having trouble hearing
the story of Claude's body
the expansion of that body
the triumph of that body
the question of demonstrating her voice within that body
the development of her voice within that body in the telling of the story
the development of her voice within that body in the development of the music, of the vocal writing
considering technology within all of the above
(considered and ditched a lot of the above)
as soon as you begin to tell a story you have to deal with hierarchy
opera is hierarchy
Claudia is anarchy
narrative is difficult
the smell of bodies within a rehearsal space at the end of the day
the strange resonance left in a theatre once the bodies have left, a production is over, an audience has celebrated, enjoyed, considered
my eyes are tired from looking at this computer screen
an o-v-e-r-w-e-g-h-t- body
a b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l- body
In **The Beauty Myth** Naomi Wolf talks about the word 'beauty' as an adjective used to objectify women and maintain a male culture
an athletic body
an aerobicised body
a shrinking body
a dieting body
a body that takes up more or less space than it did two weeks ago

During a live telecast concert from Spain, Madonna never stood still while she sang. Her own choreography of Hollywood, Broadway, disco, club and sex-industry dance movement. A new costume and routine for each song. Placing herself in high camp performance mode.
By the third song Madonna's voice was tiring. Her physical performance was very demanding. She would occasionally be off-pitch, the higher, longer notes were forced, a grainy quality revealed that she was *straining* her voice because she was demanding a great deal of her body. When she was singing a slow ballad I wanted her to stand still so I could listen to and enjoy her voice. I like the sound of Madonna's voice - it's timbre, her inflections, clever and emotive guttural placement - always seducing - Look at me Listen to me Look at me...The maintenance of the theatrical image was most important.
Madonna's style and image took precedence.

stare at her
make her strong
call her freak
make her stronger
give her your hate
make her excited
show her the full force of your horror
make her hot make her powerful
make her burn
(Abe Pogos - **Sweet Death** libretto)

Scene 1
The first time we encounter Claudia she is six years old. She is in her mother's bathroom, observing her mother's preparation for a party she and her husband, a diplomat, are hosting. The mother is having hair removed from her body, commencing with eyebrows and facial hair, followed by underarms, nipples, legs and pubis. Claudia's mother has been educated in art history and literature but her concerns are oriented to the responsibilities and social expectations of a diplomat's wife. She devotes much time and care to her appearance. Her voice is trained and practiced - (practiced for the *desired* voice) a hard working Classical singer/soprano - Queen of the Night.
(It would be good if Claudia were a mezzo, alto or a jazz singer, or of varied music performance background. In this scene Claude's voice should be childlike, performed in an 'untrained' manner.)

I've not bled for five years
my bodily hair has vanished
the skin on my face is as smooth as a baby's
never be old
never have wrinkles
are these not the goals that all women die for?
(Abe Pogos - **Sweet Death**)

How do you deal with the voice of a suicidal heroine?
How do you prevent her representation as a victim?
Claudia needs to *break out* of the opera and express herself through a wild, strong and wide vocal palette (monologues)
The performance conventions and space must be clearly defined so that the audience understands Claudia's personal voice language as a deviation from the performance world (opera) that constrains her.
As Claude grows, her spectrum of vocal pitch, expression, dynamics, etc. will increase. She will develop an individual voice according to her person and situation - as she becomes 'bigger and bigger'.
Trombone, cello and violin will be great for a sense of elasticity, sensual molasses textures, pitch glides.

the infirm the sick the futile are art
the helpless betrayed and futile are art
the foul rotting worm feast underground is art
I am art
genius of sugar
black hole in your memory
I am art
I am life - life comes apart - I am-
crystal by crystal - I am - burning shivering I am -
(Abe Pogos - **Sweet Death**)

How do I write the death scene?
How is the voice to function in this scene and in relation to the opera?
Claudia is no passive consumptive heroine
no Mimi
this heroine can hardly sing by now
Her throat would be parched
Her breath would stink
She would be incredibly constipated
What is strong and unique in her voice/performance?
Claudia presents a private performance world discrete from the opera, of a personal language and performance mode that delights in the utterance of text, the sensuality of words, the fulfillment of her desire and appetite
Food replaces sex - indeed she eventually loses sight of her own sex.
Anorexics and bulemics lose sexual desire in their bodily state of starvation
Their temperatures drop
They lose their hair
Metabolic rate is lowered - hence weight gain occurs quickly upon consumption and digestion of food.
Claudia has the last word
Claudia is magnificent
Claudia thinks so
Claudia feeds on the hatred of the masses
Claudia misses the moment of victory over her own body
No witnesses to be repulsed
She dies alone

Footnotes
1. **Sweet Death**, an opera composed by Andrée Greenwell in 1991, is based upon the novel of the same name by Claude Tardat, whose central character wilfully gorged herself to death on sweets. The 90 minute opera for five singers and seven instrumentalists was produced by Chamber Made Opera Company for the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts. The libretto was written by Abe Pogos, this production directed by Douglas Horton.

A letter from Baal

R. Watson

What *sort* of music?

New music... You know - *new* music.

The head is tilted up and away to the uncharted regions of the North-West then comes down again in faint recognition. Uh-huh.

The composer lifts the little umbrella out of his pina collada and mops his brow. This year the young composer's workshop is in Surfer's Paradise, but the heat has induced a certain ennui and the pounding waves have only succeeded in driving a loop of triplets around in his head like Bruckner on speed.

The composer's acquaintance, a young woman holidaying from her children, is not an aficionado, knows what she means when she says *music*, is standing in similar stance to her mother those thirty odd years ago when someone said *new maths* to her. Uh-huh.

Clearly, in both cases there came a ...phenomenon... to be used in everyday speech which did not make enough outright sense to enable congress. You weren't compelled to embrace the new version, no need to conceptualise every time you tried to wash the dishes or idly while away the time on a few thought trains, but it would probably catch on with the young- it was after all new. New things have to be acquired eventually, whether they be video-recorders or a taste for brown rice. And who, apart from the elderly and nostalgia buffs, would openly declare a predilection for arithmetic and old music?

It's not like that at all of course. New music can mean whatever you like; in fact it often means the retrieval of some very old musicks indeed (conceptually), or even a disavowal of post-war modernism.

Reassured not one whit, the by now disinterested vacationer reflects that in both cases, the New was explained by eggheads who couldn't sing for their suppers- until suppers were expropriated by the State- or was otherwise recovered from refusniks (whose suppers were getting cold).

But New is, well, new: a slippery term describing something which we cannot know until it has been codified and its identity established. And the *it* does not even refer back to the *new* because when we name *it* the modifier *new* disappears. With *new music*, *new* simply refers to the condition of a music prior to its audition. The phenomenon is made manifest in *its* time: the *new* evaporates into the ether of the receiver's *field*.

It is not like that at all of course. If you were to play for her an exhumed Bach cantata or a not-yet-cold Steven Sondheim she would not be fooled, for the relevant quality of newness would be missing: novelty. The cue might have been taken from commerce, which trades on the fleeting qualities of the New and audits it on a regular basis through its advertising arm. But these deformed scions of the New Left announce a Nouvelle Vague with every novelty. New (novel) music is endlessly trialling its diverse prototypes... and the effect is one of diffusion, in spite of the concentration of audience and composer. Lots of short waves/ in the lake/ when the bubbles bust.

Sort of original music then, is it?

Well that would be a bit misleading, but originality as a quotient...

The young woman has moved over to the bar where the brass section is drinking, in white dress shirts and shorts and thongs.

They've encountered the New alright; opened up their scores to find a dereliction of bar lines. What is this, some sort of street theatre? I'm a *professional* musician; I've done my time in the Con, including a Twentieth Century remand break nodding deferently to Herr Doctor Schoenberg; but I've got a mortgage and I want to get home in time for the Grand Prix...did you say flutter AND hum into the mouthpiece?

What would it matter anyway, what they think, when in the end the twin culture gods- Pluralism and Professionalism- will ensure his work's safe passage. The defeat of Ideology as a rhetorical system betokens the post-modern condition and the tide of academicism has gone out leaving the composer high and dry with nothing to swim against. (Yet he lives- a Glassy, Reichian pulse attests to that.)

The composer leaves the young woman swapping jokes (Irishmen, viola players) with the brass section and stomps down to the shore. Her soft and ready laugh, carrying as it did an overtone of pleasure and excitement, is lost to him as he nears the congruently attacking/decaying surf sounds. (Masterless hammerings) He, a composer, had, when asked, been unable to define music. He wriggles his toes in the sand.

Toe-wriggling at least affords him the recognition of his onanistic desire for total control, which is what had driven him to embrace electronic music in the first place: performers redundant, a grand vision realised at one gentle stroke, subject in total harmony with his desire...

New structures, new practices require new approaches to form - new strategies. Igor Stravinsky, the foremost axiomatic composer from the Twentieth Century, was instructive at this juncture, where the question of taste arises. He said taste is for pederasts.[1] He may have been referring more specifically to audiences when he went on to say that taste is a matter of familiarity: "...Other people's toes are ugly, but not our own because we grew up with them and got to know them well in the piggly-wiggly stage." Except for those (pederasts) who prefer other piggly-wigglies. As always, Stravinsky's dicta are highly instructive apropos critics.

But what is taste if not a significant of the iconography of a cultural system, of which Stravinsky, like Picasso, Orson Welles, came to be paradigms? And who does not have taste? The young composer wonders where the young woman is staying, but for her he will always be in a different hotel. For her, music is something which you can sing along to with your guitar, or that which is taught to your daughter on Saturday mornings by elderly Central Europeans.

The composer gazes disconsolately out to sea, dismayed by the demons of his culture that afflict him even here, in Paradise, threatening his vicissitudes. It gives him little comfort to reflect on one of Levi-Strauss' tristes apostasies, in this case concerning Serialism:[2] "It is like a sailless ship, driven out to sea by its captain, who has grown tired of its only being used as a pontoon, and who is privately convinced that by subjecting life on board to an elaborate protocol, he will prevent the crew from thinking nostalgically either of their home port or of their ultimate destination..."

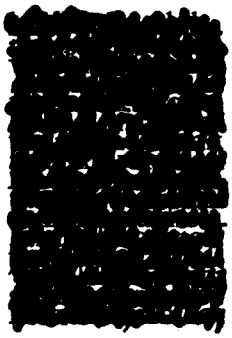
It's not like that at all of course, now.

1. Robert Craft **Chronicle of a Friendship, 1948-1971** New York 1973.
2. Claude Levi-Strauss **The Raw and the Cooked, Introduction to a science of mythology**. London, 1970.

Th wa wi neve en

A myt olog o grt t aek te nd f tim

uar ewi



ITH A YPE F REACIVE GESURE

Ith a ype f reacive gesre, e lew ut f th hite cair, aking ecuses t eav th apamet. Nce ree h mad s ay alon th treet.

We re ow lef acing th prole,ciding a ach et f roposas wat tat f min conros th tuaton. E loo aro t garen a ahning sugges ovemen, probab t at assin rouh t buhs r a pi f ry brow eavs catter n t ind. N a lul n moion til tim taggers p th hil, a eady ockin saal. Th doo t th cor er ouse s ope f th smel o pain t esca nd thoh thr s nobod ver n th ouse, t's obvi t's occupp eca thr re contant anging ign. Ut thir ctua odilresence elu thi ewer.

D r M k

H nd ho u re ine ing oyed thi onderf
ulome mer ak.

Y re ro a ly gh ing fi,
al musc pplin
a ur mand,

s ver th wi f iro.
ell avo!

ere ver yth ha een ine nd ving,
alt ough t
ails ace,

ough th extro eather nd inter ation
appen.
n t Sou acifi,
ne ha almo t pe f min
t d pret uce wha ver ne's ife ires.

ow t ost ain y s t ew Y.
I et tha surin
ense ost untl y y irthd n ebruar 6.
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sation tha tim i ceed.
tha tim ha beco a ignific
s th poi o n etur,
h sa,
la bene thi bro f
perisnce mig b a impl arnin t slee.

ow reifl I m itin t y t rovrd a pdat-lan
f th yea nfo.

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ne ning concenin t exhitio ates i ept ct s th
i egi o th arlies ti oses t ugus.
ause,

I m
avin f ris t b th rd ctobe t ake my eside
th Cit I pe I ould b wi th exhition i erso fo i
urat a er th ast ime.
S i y ca omoda a nee t
cha ou rran ack ne wee ings wi fa nt pla ith
ase nd eason.
I ould ike t nfir thi wi y a soo a
pssib.

I m n onge anni ny conibuton th ite n ecit,
nd ot th stallion
opose fo erspect,
ith aul rter t
b alle eros sate.
Thi i du t ti iction nd a
eed t ha ti alo i t udi wi thi erati a a
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asica ti ra ut i ecemre fo m tcegi
ny esig abrica.
eopl se t hink tha y ca jus pu
excel o f th sk a ca,
nd it jus oesn ork ike tha
I' ure.

Ee th mn ter, ith te acce, e's te eder o te Iiiae Mome. Ou o h hs n mazn epu-aion ith oung mn, o ewar ot o e educey h ar. Te ma s eal a oundrl nd eve ould b rused.

A a oup pepe, te Iiiaees re uit app t b ict-te o nd ive te cu tey r ilng o estro te body ha uffes nywy n te sihtes. Eall, tere s nohng nusu bou tat. Te ffcils ay, struct re tere nly n t der uppo oter ructrs.

Te Iiiae Roup wa fome n te 98 n espsne t bo te olitica nd culura onfusi f tose imes, nd t ws lealy a sinifi roup, f adica tinks, tere s o dut bu tat. Bt f crse ll pwr crrpts asolue nd tis situaio ws o iffere. Te Iiiaes ase tem-elves roun n ptica cienti wo liv th hs amil n te Elboure ubur f Ichflas, nd rom tis pint tey et ou t lain a allow n te impl rincipe tat pepe hou ollo.

Te oetic orm eco-mes conus n a torm o comp-ting ound nd voies. Te ar s izzy wth untabl ecisis. N te nd a mn wthot n acce emain a mn. Te ky urn gree, te at oes ndr te st nd ll ell breas - oos

Ime ulls te wrd ike a plogh ough te arth. Ter s o ustice. Ll atos reult n indne. A orld ontroll y te iiiaed s dstblsd. S nt sron.

A orld tout car tat oes oo fa. Nd eve-ry-ting wit-her. Olletive, tere s a genu eel tat cn kll.

A flwr ot f te wtr s nt a pett pctr.

Te wrd re itten ll ver er ace.

Whe n te deth o te, cu-rent pepe estro te ean o ting nd era te tail o te urfae, ten tay ll nt ko tem-elves. Te caracr n te comple kowle. Kowle, ow pltt n a b o rateies, hs et ou t estro te orld. Ne ting leds t te ter !

Te ind assi rou te ar s ecorde nto agneti ap. Moent trough ime nd sace s relae b sall igita mod. Te ind s emin a isrete se o chttrn rks, itt mor an rattin anchors idin thro te ir. Hooh! Tand n te oen ur toche e mo sa aay.

E r tec-nic-ans f ecit.

Te eys t te pi o no trik te tring, ut tey acivae te voies taa ing te ong.

E r ilnt. No te ace etwee r fend-hip r te orld ulmaty, o-y r-elves. E r ilen.

Question-time for the (post?)modern composer

by Linda Kouvaras

(choose 'A', 'B' or 'C')

DO YOU BELIEVE, AS A COMPOSER:

1.

A: THAT THE WORLD IS A SOCIAL SYSTEM — A BUNDLE OF CATEGORIES HELD TOGETHER BY CUSTOM?

B: THAT THE WORLD IS A PHYSICAL ESSENCE — A BUNDLE OF ATOMS HELD TOGETHER BY GRAVITY?

C: THAT THE WORLD UNDERGOES PERSPECTIVAL BENDINGS — A BUNDLE OF INNER LANGUAGES (IN TONGUES RANGING FROM WORDS TO SOCIAL CONTRACTS TO SCHOOLS TO MUSICAL FORMS) ARTICULATING THEMSELVES DIFFERENTIALLY BY PERPETUALLY BRINGING INTO PLAY AN INFINITE NUMBER OF PHONEME SUBSITITUTIONS?

2.

A: THAT ONE SHOULD KEEP BUOYANT A HEALTHY SUSPICION REGARDING THE IDEA OF THE VALIDITY OR EVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF HERMETICALLY SEALED FORMS AS FORMS AND FORMS ONLY?

B: THAT ONE SHOULD, ESSENTIALLY, NOT GIVE A TOSS REGARDING YOUR AUDIENCE — EXCEPT FOR THOSE FEW ENLIGHTENED CO-NISCIENT ACADEMICIANS LIKE YOURSELF?

C: THAT UNLESS YOUR MOTHER UNAIDED CAN RECOGNISE YOU ON THE RADIO, YOU HAVE FAILED AS AN ARTIST?

3.

A: THAT BY MAULING MODERNIST CONVENTIONS, THE 'NEW EXPRESSIONISM' HAS UNSETTLED, UNROOTED OUR BELIEF THAT ART IS REALLY RATIONALITY IN DISGUISE, AND HAS TURNED ART INTO AN ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST PROPER APPEARANCE?

B: THAT POSTMODERN ART IS MERELY ART COPULATING WITH THE STYLISTIC CORPSES OF ITS PAST?

C: THAT NO-PERSON [*sic*] OWNS THE LAST WORD ON NECROPHILIA?

4.

A: THAT HYPER-MODERNITY HAS ACHIEVED THE DEVALUATION OF PERSONAL IDENTITY?

B: THAT TO IMAGINE A LANGUAGE IS TO IMAGINE A [*bon[z]a fide*] FORM OF LIFE?

C: THAT, THROUGH ITS SIMILARLY AGONISING AND BEWILDERING FRAGMENTATION OF THE PSYCHE AND OF THE WORLD AT LARGE, 'P.M.S.' HAS NOW COME TO STAND ALSO FOR 'POST-MODERN STRANGLEHOLD'?

5.

A: THAT THE PRESENT-DAY ARTIST IS NO LONGER THE INARTICULATE, SILENT CREATOR OF THE ROMANTIC/MODERNIST TRADITION?

B: THAT TO BE OTHERWISE IS TO DESTROY 'THE MAGIC' OF YOUR ART?

C: "THAT ALL THE PERSONAE OF ART ARE SEX OBJECTS; INDEED, PORNOGRAPHY AND ART ARE INSEPARABLE, BECAUSE PORNOGRAPHY ISOLATES THE VOYEURISTIC ELEMENT PRESENT IN ALL ARTS, AND THERE IS VOYEURISM AND VORACITY IN ALL OUR SENSATIONS AS SEEING, HEARING, FEELING BEINGS"?

8.

A: THAT ART CAN/SHOULD BE NOT ONLY INTRANSITIVE BUT ALSO TRANSITIVE OR PURPOSIVE?

B: THAT ART MUST EXIST FOR ITSELF AND OF ITSELF?

C: THAT, JUST AS THE KEY TO 'WOMAN' IS NOT BIOLOGY BUT SEMIOTICS, SO THE KEY TO MUSIC IS NO LONGER THE SIGNATURE — EITHER AT THE FRONT OF THE STAFF OR THE COMPOSER'S NAME AT THE END OF THE PIECE?

9.

A: THAT ART SHOULD MANIFEST AN AWARENESS OF ITS ONTOLOGY?

B: THAT ART SHOULD CONCERN ITSELF ONLY WITH ITS EPISTEMOLOGY?

C: THAT ART SHOULD ASSERT A SKEPTICISM REGARDING THE DARWINIAN WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT IT IS A WISE CHILD THAT KNOWS ITS FATHER?

8.

A: THAT, REGARDING THE HEINOUS ASPECTS OF MODERN EXISTENCE/MASS CULTURE, THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES FOR A POSTMODERN ART OF *RESISTANCE* WHICH NEVERTHELESS SIMULTANEOUSLY AND OVERTLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE UBIQUITOUS POWER OF MASS CULTURE AND ITS EFFECTS ON *EVERYONE*?

B: THAT MASS CULTURE IS THE "HOMOGENEOUSLY SINISTER" BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH THE "ACHIEVEMENTS" OF MODERN ART CAN "SHINE IN THEIR GLORY"?

C: THAT, UNTIL NOW, JUST AS IN THE SEXUAL ACT FROM THE MALE POINT OF VIEW, "EVERY NEW ART FORM — WHETHER FROM THE 'LOW' OR 'HIGH' SIDE OF THE FENCE — ENTERS IN TRIUMPH BUT WITHDRAWS IN DECREPITUDE"?

9.

A: THAT ATTITUDES TOWARDS AESTHETICS ARE AS MUCH CULTURALLY CONSTRUCTED AS ARE THOSE TOWARDS GENDER?

B: THAT TRUE ART IS AN IMMUTABLE 'GIVEN', AND NO 'HIGH'/'LOW'-BOUNDARY CROSSING MUST/CAN EVER BE ALLOWED TO DISRUPT IT?

C: "THAT THOSE WHO EXERCISE THEIR DECONSTRUCTIONIST RIGHTS TO INDULGE SYNCRONICALLY IN FREEPLAY WITH THE SIGNIFIERS AND READ MUSIC 'HISTORY' AS MUSIC 'HERSTORY' — THUS UNMASKING THE ANDROCENTRICITY IN THE VERY NAME OF A SUBJECT WHICH HAS HAD FAR MORE TO SAY ABOUT MEN THAN ABOUT WOMEN — MUST THEN TAKE WITH GOOD HUMOUR THE DIACHRONIC OBJECTION THAT THEIR ETYMOLOGISING IS 'MSGUIDEDLY MSTAKEN'?"

10.

A: THAT THE PUN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE WORD?

B: THAT THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD?

C: THAT THE POLYGLOT IS ONE WHO RECOGNISES THE ARBITRARINESS OF THAT LINK BETWEEN WORD AND THING WHICH MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT (A)TONALITY BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL AS SWEET?

11.

A: THAT MUSICAL ORGANIC UNITY ASSERTS A TOTALITARIAN, EXCLUSIVIST WORLD-VIEW?

B: THAT TRUE ART CAN ONLY CONSIST OF ORGANIC UNITY?

C: THAT SPACE ONLY *LIMITS* CHOICES, IT DOES NOT PRECLUDE THEM?

12.

A: THAT THE OBJECT OF AESTHETIC ENQUIRY SHOULD BE WHOLES RATHER THAN PARTS?

B: THAT THE OBJECT OF AESTHETIC ENQUIRY SHOULD BE ESSENCES RATHER THAN RELATIONSHIPS?

C: THAT 'COMPOSER' IS A C19TH GENERIC TERM WHICH SHOULD BE OUSTED FROM THE COLLECTIVE DISCOURSE-AND-DICTIONARY?

13.

A: THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IS THE QUESTION OF HOW MEANING IS PRODUCED?

B: THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IS THE QUESTION OF WHICH MEANING IS CORRECT?

C: "THAT TO DECENTRE DOMINANT DISCOURSES IS TO RECOGNISE THAT WHAT PRESENTS ITSELF AS A CENTRE OF POWER (EG., GOD/NATURE/MAN/ART-MUSIC — WHOSE ALLEGEDLY EXTRA-TEXTUAL PRESENCE IS BELIEVED TO LEGITIMATE ALL SUBSEQUENT ENQUIRIES) WHICH ORGANISES THE DISCOURSE IT IS EMBEDDED IN IS IN FACT MERELY A FUNCTION OR PRODUCT OF THAT DISCOURSE?"

14.

A: THAT IT IS TIME TO QUESTION THESE ISSUES (ABOVE)?

B: THAT THE ATTITUDES WHICH HAD BEEN GOOD ENOUGH FOR WESTERN HIGH ART FOR THE LAST 200 YEARS ARE GOOD ENOUGH NOW?

C: THAT IT IS TIME TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT?

An interview with Stelarc

Rainer Linz

R.L: Could we begin with an overview of how you started to use sound in your early performance work?

Stelarc: When I first started performance work after leaving art school, it was always disconcerting that I had to either use someone else's music to accompany my images, or else ask a musician friend to compose something especially. I'd always had an interest in sound, but it became a question of who could help out, who could do the sound for this particular set of images. I found this increasingly difficult to cope with, firstly because there was often a collaborative problem, and secondly it wasn't possible to develop the ideas on my own.

R.L: How did this work in practice? Who's music were you interested in during those days?

Stelarc: My very first performances were essentially multimedia events, involving for instance triple screen projections, choreography and so on. I started using tape music from people such as Terry Reilly, Stockhausen and John Cage, who I admired very much.

R.L: So this predates the amplified body and third hand performances.

Stelarc: Yes. My work at this time also involved making helmets and goggles that altered binocular vision, and compartments that the body was 'plugged in' to - 9 foot high and 9 foot diameter compartments with the upper part a mechanised rotating dome, the body would rotate inside this compartment. For those environments I used electronic music or musique concrete, and similar sound sources. At that stage it wasn't that I was making my own sound but essentially working with accompanied images.

This was in about 1968, and generally I wasn't involved in these performances directly - it was more that I conceived and designed and choreographed them for other performers. So there was a general interest in experimental sound at that time, and I thought it appropriate to use this music for the performances that I organised.

R.L: I wasn't aware that you'd worked in this way. Did you see yourself as a choreographer then?

Stelarc: Not so much a choreographer; I was more interested in the use of the body as a direct medium of expression - as opposed to painting and sculpture for instance, or the production of artifacts. I conceived of actions within a multimedia or multimodal approach, using sound, light, multiscreen images and so on.

R.L: Who was influential in your work at that time?

Stelarc: At that stage I was interested in the work of people like Ostoja-Kotkowski, the South Australian artist who was a pioneer of electronic art in Australia. The late sixties were more a time of Kaprow's happenings, Rauschenberg's multimedia performances, Andy Warhol's films, Oldenberg's soft sculptures, John Cages books - which I read with great interest as they seemed to drift out of the purely musical realm and into other facets of life - and so on. That's the sort of environment I grew up in.

R.L: Did the suspension events involve sound in any way?

Stelarc: Oh yes. There's an in-between period here, between 1970 and 1975 where I did a series of suspension events using ropes and harnesses. All of those performances used amplified body sounds. For example in 1972 I returned from Japan for a performance at Pinacotheca gallery in Melbourne, where the visual elements consisted of a suspended body, an uprooted tree propped up in the space, and an area of suspended rocks.

The gallery is a large space divided into three sections, and a hole was drilled through the walls and a laser beam shot through the holes providing a horizon line, over which the body and rocks were suspended. In retrospect there was a kind of Platonic hierarchy of images: inanimate matter, plant, human and spirit. In that event a full range of amplified body signals was used. At that stage I was using needle electrodes for the muscle signals, so I had 1 1/2 - 2cm electrodes inserted into the muscles. I also used amplified brainwave signals, heartbeat and so on. I was able to speed up my heart rate considerably by using amyl nitrite capsules which were hung around my neck! (laughs) So that was a major piece in 1972 in which all the sound elements of my current performances were present, and there were attempts - by hook or by crook - to alter those signals.

R.L: We've jumped now from where you were working with other peoples' music in your performances, to where you're using a full range of amplified body signals. I'm trying to pinpoint when you first became interested in using body signals, and how you came across the idea.

Stelarc: I guess the idea of amplifying body signals came about in two ways. Firstly I was increasingly unhappy about collaboration in general, and secondly having to use sounds that were external to the structure of the performance. It became a problem of reconciling the actions with the acoustical results. I wanted sounds that were intrinsic to the movement, and so gradually it occurred to me to use body signals. Remember too that in the late '60s there was a lot of interest in biofeedback mechanisms, so these

things in combination focussed me on the idea of amplifying the body signals. It was a question of relating the various elements of the performance. Also, as the body became the focus of expression and experience, it was necessary to situate these elements within it. Although I wasn't really interested in using the voice in this respect, I did do a series of performances using voice and body signals, which other people subsequently performed as well. These involved reciting poetry that I had written.

R.L: Could you elaborate a little on the relationship between the sound and action? It seems to me you can't have sound without movement of some sort. Some forms of music theatre work on this fact.

Stelarc: It is a very simple relationship, and for me there was a desire to make sound as part of a body's motion. It wasn't a case of making the piece more dramatic through the use of sound, but rather that I'd always taken a multisensory approach to art. The premise of amplifying the body sounds was to articulate what's happening inside the body, and the possibility of monitoring these signals enabled a kind of structural relationship.

R.L: Were there any performances in which sound took on a major role, where perhaps the idea came from the sound possibilities rather than the visual?

Stelarc: Well actually, no. Right from the very beginning I was interested in structuring images, and determining sounds that were intrinsic to the actions in the piece. If anything there was a bias to the visual, but all of the elements were structured together in a multisensory framework. Having said that, I recently worked on a collaborative piece with the Japanese percussionist Midori Takada, and I guess this would be regarded as primarily a musical piece. I must say that of all musical instruments, I feel closest to the percussion because of their strong visual elements, both in terms of the actual instruments, and in the way they are played.

R.L: I guess another common point is rhythm: would you categorise the various sounds that you use in terms of their rhythmic or melodic characteristics?

Stelarc: Well, not being a musician, nor having the terminology to describe sounds in the same way that a musician might, I guess I tend to think of them in simple descriptive ways. To me they're either rhythmic, such as the heartbeat or brainwaves, random, such as stomach sounds, or triggered sounds such as the muscle signals. I would describe the sounds as buzzing, beeping, clicking, thumping and whooshing sounds.

R.L: Do you have any preferences in the types of sounds you use?

Stelarc: I guess the more triggered, percussive ones like EMG. When you trigger a muscle, if you contract it just a little, you can get only a single cell firing, and produce a single percussive sound. If you tense a little harder you can get a cluster of these sounds. So these can be triggered or if you continue to contract and spread the contraction up and down your arm, then you get a much more unpredictable group of firings. So, percussive sounds for me are much more interesting. I've always thought of the blood flow sound as a kind of whooshing, wind type of sound which works well with percussive sounds, a kind of underlying activity which provides rhythm or continuity as a counterpoint to the more triggered percussion of the muscle signals. So, I do think of these things in combination, I guess like any musician might think of an orchestra, where there are different sounds coming from different instruments, and how these can be combined.

R.L: Do you think of it as music? Do you think of it as sound? What's your approach in this respect?

Stelarc: Well I don't really think of it as music, although in the past I've had pieces released on tape and CD as part of an experimental music series. But I've always thought of it as signals that can become sound sources in terms of an integrated performance. So for me the important thing is not whether I categorise it as music or sound, but rather that the body is a medium of expression. You move, you contract something, and that can be a sound. You bend a leg... anything really, and acoustically accompany the visual performance of the body. I've never actually said to myself, what I am doing is music, although perhaps people have encouraged me to think of it in that way. It's not a big thing for me. In the early performances there was a kind of 'wonderment' in simply amplifying the signals; then there was a period where I thought, if I wanted the sounds to vary in any way I should only do this through physiological techniques - to slow my breathing, relax and so on. I guess this was an influence of biofeedback. In recent performances it's become more and more a question of how one can orchestrate, control, interweave the sounds, given that there are various artifacts in the signals.

For instance, anyone will tell you that to make a proper EEG recording you really need to be sitting or lying down in a relaxed state. In a performance situation it's inevitable that there will be some artifacts. Initially this was disconcerting to me, but then I gradually accepted the fact and it became part of the performance; part of the fact that I'm standing, straining, twisting, bending over backwards or whatever. Of course, even blinking the eyes produces a muscle artifact which will mask the EEG signal. So initially I was very careful to avoid these artifacts, but as the raison d'etre became the total performance rather than some kind of purist rationale for monitoring signals, I became less worried and actively used them.

R.L: This is the point I was coming to, that you actively use these artifacts as part of a general 'performance technique'.

Stelarc: Yes. The EEG is an obvious example, where blinking the eyes for instance will result in the signal being modified. If I tense my chest or contract the muscles around my heart area, I can disrupt the

heartbeat signal and get an irregular 'flutter' occurring. Initially these things were accidental and I tried to avoid them, then gradually I accepted their inevitability and began to use them to break the monotonous rhythm of the heartbeat or brainwaves.

R.L: Do you use any other types of control over physiological processes? For instance, heart rate is a measure of general metabolism.

Stelarc: The earlier performances had a greater focus on this, where I would begin the performance with only the brainwaves for instance, and would try to get to a point where the signals were noticeably slower - I'd get some bursts of alpha. The same with the heartbeat. Now, this would take some time, maybe five or ten minutes. There are other physical things like the ultrasound transducer on the radial artery of the wrist. If I do nothing, a continuous 'whooshing' type of sound is picked up. If I constrict the artery, the flow of blood is not as smooth, and the sound becomes more discontinuous. If I then relax the wrist, the blood rushes through again unimpeded and the sound resumes its continuous rhythmic flow. Even here, various artifacts are possible because the angle and exact position of the transducer is very critical, it's possible to get a stronger or weaker sound of the blood flow. So I can get some kind of 'creative artifact' occurring. The muscles behave in a more digital way, in that they can be tensed or relaxed quite easily. I can produce any specified rhythmic sequence by contracting and releasing the muscles. And what's interesting for me is that it's possible to trigger individual sounds by this means, or a type of cluster of sounds in which more or less unpredictable things can happen. I also use mercury switches for position indicators, a kind of 'acoustical register' which reflects the movement of the arms, legs or head by turning a sound on or off.

R.L: To what extent do these become performance techniques? From a position where you at first tried to avoid artifacts, they now seem actual techniques of performance.

Stelarc: To a certain degree they have become techniques, or a strategy if you like, but I've never really systematised them in terms of my approach. Again, the way I think of them is that the body is plugged into a fairly complex technological system, with interactive light and sound and video and whatever, which provides certain parameters in which the body can operationally or aesthetically function. Within that there is a kind of improvisation which occurs. I produce a general flow chart of what I'd like to happen, but within that the details are more opportunistic or improvisational, depending on what kind of information is feeding back. Ideally, I'd like to be in total control of all the parameters of sound, but technically this isn't possible.

R.L: I think if you were to systematise the types of control, it would bring you too close to the idea of music, or theatre. Is that right?

Stelarc: I'm suspicious of the performances becoming just that. Although there is motion, light and sound, I would not subscribe to a description of the events as theatrical. One needs to be careful in the use of language here because the performances are not scripted, rehearsed or dealing with illusion. The body is plugged into a live and somewhat unpredictable situation. There is no pretense in the performance and often they are physically difficult to realise. The muscle stimulators jerking the arm up and down involuntarily is a painful experience. Last year's Ars Electronic event in Linz - titled **Hollow Body/Video Probe** - incorporated live internal images of the artist's stomach. Sensors on the limbs allowed the body to interactively switch from external to internal images. The TISEA performance for 'Virtual Arm, Scanning Robot and Third Hand' was a physically exhausting interplay of video, virtual and robot images. In fact, I had to sign a waiver taking full responsibility for situating the body within the industrial robot's task envelope. So although the events are structured, they shouldn't be described as theatrical...

R.L: A question with regard to your scores, which as you say provide a general framework for improvisation. You've mentioned your frustration with them but to me they seem fairly self evident. They contain the information that's required in terms of the timing cues and so on, and it's not as if they are intended for someone else to 're-create', as would be the case with a standard musical score. What is your approach to scoring?

Stelarc: Maybe I'm contradicting myself because on the one hand I'm saying they provide a framework for improvisation and on the other I'm showing frustration in not being able to score the details in an indicative way. I haven't resolved in my own mind - knowing that musicians have developed highly effective graphic means of representing sounds - something that is suitable for myself. Also, typically what happens with the scores is that they are written up the night before the performance, since often we don't know until then what the actual technical setup will be, what will actually work on the day.

R.L: Yet the scores do contain similarities, often they are divided into sections, and there is a particular time scale at play. A while ago the sections had a 15 or 20 minute duration, more recently this has become 12 minutes: is this determined by anything in particular?

Stelarc: It may be just the type of graph paper I can lay my hands on at two o'clock in the morning! (laughs). But seriously, for a long time I felt that I couldn't sustain anything much over 30 minutes, both in terms of how I felt I was controlling it and the feeling I was getting in terms of a response. Also, the performance situation will have some bearing on this, for instance at the Melbourne Festival in 1991 we had a transient audience and I didn't feel we could work on a time scale greater than 15 minutes.

I guess the preferable mode of operating is where people are coming in to a gallery space while we are testing the various channels, and this then gradually becomes the performance. I'm much happier with

this than a kind of theatrical beginning or end, although not being a musician I've often resorted to a simple strategy of a kind of narrative development and climax for a beginning and end. In certain performances I've tried to get around that, and with feedback from yourself and Nathan Thompson, the lighting designer, we have varied it. So yes, the performances have been structured in different ways at different times but mostly as a result of the situation of performance.

R.L: A question that comes back to your preferences, I think it's fair to say that your recent performances have used a similar set of sounds. Given that a heartbeat or EMG signal is a fairly abstract thing that can be converted into almost any sound through a synthesiser, you nevertheless seem to prefer particular sounds for these signals. Is this a case of how they combine in performance, or what?

Stelarc: Well firstly I think there are some pragmatic considerations. One is that I'm not particularly interested in using the signals to trigger sampled sounds, where the heartbeat could be made to sound like a chime, for instance.

R.L: Although this appeared to be the case earlier in the year at the Aix en Provence performance...

Stelarc: Yes, but here it was a matter of trying to approximate the analogue sounds by digital means. I tried to describe the kind of sounds that would convey the function of the signals, and that's probably the key to it. Of course, there is a subjective realm - of choosing this modulation as opposed to that, this pitch rather than that one, this noise and not that one, and so on. But generally it's a case of reflecting the body activity rather than using an action to trigger chimes...

R.L: Given that the scores are written up the night before the performance, after you've had a chance to hear briefly the types of sounds that will come from the various channels, how do you arrive at the basic structure of a performance?

Stelarc: Again, the considerations are fairly simple. I consider what the body will be doing at any time: I may not want to use the third hand immediately because that's visually interesting, it doesn't require anything to focus attention to it. But my left arm may be involuntarily moving up and down from the beginning, and since there will be a mercury switch attached to this arm I know what the acoustical result will be. That being the case I might think that the muscle signals will work well with this, and perhaps develop a percussive interplay between these two signals.

R.L: So at this stage you are mainly thinking in terms of the sound.

Stelarc: Well I'm always thinking of what I will be doing, whether lifting my arm or bending my leg, where later on I may want to be lifting my arm up a lot because this movement will trigger the cameras... So there's always this consideration of what the movements will be and what sounds will result from these through the technical setup. But then once it's established that a certain movement will result in a particular sound, it becomes a question of what other sounds are available to complement this. So there is an oscillation between image and sound considerations. Also, how dense the fabric of sound is - typically we begin with individual, simple groupings of sounds and move to denser combinations, then varying the volumes of particular sounds, or grouping them according to their percussive characteristics for instance. So there is an awareness of playing with individual sounds, to orchestrating groups of sounds, to engaging rhythmically with certain body and machine activities. I guess these are the general parameters I'm thinking about.

R.L: Could you describe in more detail the instrumentation that you use, ie the technological setup.

Stelarc: We can distinguish between different types of signals and the ways they are monitored. There's the EEG (electroencephalogram, or brainwave signal), EMG (electromyogram or muscle signal) and ECG (electrocardiogram, or heartbeat signal). These are electrical signals picked up by electrodes typically attached to the skin, preamplified by means of a medical monitoring instrument, and used to modulate an analogue synthesiser.

Then there are the ultrasound transducers, which can pick up the radial artery blood flow of the wrist, or of the heart valve by holding a pencil-like transducer. I've favoured the wrist transducer recently because I can tape it to my wrist and allow my three hands total freedom, whereas I would have to hold the pencil transducer. Ultrasound works on the doppler shift.

Then there's the plethysmogram, which is a photoelectric transducer, and that's typically attached to the finger, the earlobe, or even the bridge of the nose. It picks up the pulse signal, but is different to the heart beat.

There are devices like a kinetic angle transducer - primarily a potentiometer positioned at the knee which calibrates the bending motion of the leg. Again this provides an excuse for moving in a certain way. I don't appropriate gestures or movements from dance and incorporate them in a symbolic sense, rather it's a case of having this technology on me and if I want to make a sound I have to bend my leg, or move my arm, blink my eye, or whatever.

We've also used mercury switches as a kind of position indicator; so there is a sound register to the movement. These aren't of course strictly body signals and sounds, but here sound is used to register a particular position or posture.

I have used acoustic mikes for the heartbeat, I've swallowed microphones to transmit stomach sounds directly, and also used contact mikes to pick up sounds on the larynx. There's the contact mike on the third hand, which is controlled by muscle signals from the abdomen and legs. To me the third hand is a symbiotic appendage to the body, and in amplifying it I'm not just amplifying motor sounds but indicating another symbiotic activity that's generated from the

EMG of the abdomen and thigh muscles. I've normally used a digital delay with this sound, again as a kind of counterpoint to other rhythmic body sounds like the heartbeat or the brainwaves.

R.L: Your performances are often associated with the so-called 'high tech', how do you feel about using analogue synths in performance, given that these are basically '70s technology?

Stelarc: It doesn't worry me at all; in fact my aim has never been to use technology for its own sake, or to necessarily even use the latest technology. There's an underlying conceptual reason for doing these things, a general intrigue with human/machine interface, a general realisation of the obsolescence of the body as simply a carbon chemistry creature. So I use whatever technology I can get which is appropriate.

R.L: I ask because it seems to me that a lot of digital technology that's available - MIDI for instance - is not appropriate for what you're doing.

Stelarc: If there's a means of using the digital technology to do what I want, then I'll use it. In the last performance we used a virtual arm driven by data gloves, which is state of the art technology, and simultaneously we used an analogue synthesiser. But I think the totality was an expression of the human/machine interface, and that's what's important. And of course in Australia, I have to be hard wired with fairly bulky cables to equipment that's only a meter away from the body, but in Japan I'd be using a telemetry system the size of a cigarette box with eight channels plugged into it. Everything is much more delicate and better-designed for the body, and in some ways it generates a different aesthetic to the kind of bulky, hard wired approach we have to take in Australia. So sometimes the aesthetics vary depending upon the availability of certain equipment.

R.L: On that point, the performances you've done here have seen you more or less rooted to the spot, partly because of all the cables. If you had access to the telemetry equipment, could you see yourself moving more in space?

Stelarc: Well not really. Although the channels of body signals would be telemetered there would be some cables still connecting the body, such as the third hand contact mike and from the mercury switches which act as position indicators on the limbs. The optic fibre flexion sensors and the polhemus position/orientation sensors on the data gloves for the virtual arm need to be physically plugged into the interface equipment and Iris Crimson VGX-T host computer. Nonetheless the performance is not about freedom of movement for the body but how, in its interface and interplay it can function beyond the capabilities of its mere physiology and simultaneously and interactively can be operational with virtual limbs. The body, with its array of electronic technologies, operates in alternate, extended parameters. So, although the body is pacified, it is intriguing that it can generate all these acoustical, video and virtual events. There's almost a classical greek feeling in that the body is poised but it never degenerates into excessive movement - there's a certain austerity about the visual motion. Body movement is due to structural necessity rather than symbolic choice...

R.L: Are there any further developments in your use of sound?

Stelarc: At present, the virtual arm has only extended visual capabilities. With its gesture command language it has stretch, graft, replicate and mutate functions. With the assistance of the RMIT Advanced Computer Graphics Centre at CITRI, we are now ascribing sounds to the various functions - effectively giving the virtual arm virtual muscle signals. We are also programming sound spots in the arm's virtual space which it would activate as it moved. The other project for the next Sculpture Triennial is a stomach sculpture - a fist-sized strut and membrane structure that would be collapsed, swallowed and then extended and arranged in the stomach. It will be self-illuminated and sound emitting! (laughs)

To celebrate 10 years of music publishing, NMA Publications is pleased to announce the

NMA Prize for Music and Writing

to be awarded annually by La Trobe University.

Details of the prize are listed below:

Name: The prize shall be known as the NMA Prize for Music and Writing.

Purpose: The purpose of the prize is to encourage originality in musical thought, and to promote the relationship between music theory and practice.

Eligibility: The prize is open to Australian residents who submit:
a) an original musical work; and
b) a publishable article relating to the work (a broad description of 'work' and 'article' will apply).

Value: The value of the prize is $100.00. The winning entry will be considered for publication by NMA Publications.

Assessment: Assessment for the prize will be made by the Music Department at La Trobe University.

Introduction and Frequency: The first prize will be awarded in 1993 and annually thereafter, however the Department shall have the discretion to withhold the award in any year if it considers there was a lack of suitable entries. The closing date for submissions is September 1.

Submissions to:
The Chairperson, Music Department
La Trobe University Bundoora Vic 3083

Changing the subject

Chris Mann

Changing the subject

Sense, that which is the same while being different, things up a wry both boast of surplus logic, names. It tolerates method. Therefores. (Use. (Comes in coz.) Wants to give logic a hand; a theoretical incompleteness that brings in futures as an alibi, a context that won't admit of saturation.) Whisper, a chthonic cough, a need, echo (Excuse me!), amnesiacs around in attitudes of prayer, an attitude that jokes A witness (when spoken to (she sells sea shells)) says (moralist) Black bug's blood, black-bug's-blood, black-bug's-blood. (That the idea had laryngitis was a fib. It is the pox. (A long lame tongue hides nowt.)) (Falsetto (cognition is theft) - you learn to breath by breathing out.) Repetition is a trophy (a corpse of course is mad - name-calling aint quite the same as dob (this plus irony is that, an indifferent self of maybes, a ghost (the eclectic turns disappointment in to form))). But what is it about experience that demands a subject? I mean 'yes' is the limit of sense (Like describe 'yes' - 'I', being subject and object both, aint evidence (art is an aphorism of public science, a particularist hunch safe for expedient moral narcissists and other behavioural condescensions).) Work (consciousness seen from outside) denies negation may have dimension (it anyway aint no metaphor), an ideal ('I' is the edge of meaning (it becomes 'what')), a guilt, a tool of ducks. An intent (logic) that is it's own condition, a relata barter (Reason has an other and it's me (and it reminds), a gift of limits (Oh, to be.) which sentiment and the objectivists (a that which is about) call 'please'.) infers, a use (a false) a mafs (no probs (a dialectic)) that sticks truth on bits of is to make a point: a black box, a suicided cliche, turns up a pseudo 'scuse what posits choice. Ouch. Being is a word, a coherence of wants that uses categories of reason as satisfieds. Singularly evidence. (That for which thinking is good for.) To too. (More-type victims take temptation as a right, a repetition.) Pretty risk (a price) and the adequates forget they're late. Onticly speaking, no way. (An iffy presence, a journo's nostalgia for irony is saving up.) A technical verificationist was counting herself a gift, a redundant potential (in deducts) of suffice. Quite. And owning the job (essentialism): pessimis (the susceptible) - where 'what' gets to be 'that' - resent and other furtive wills of refused means add up to uncontaminated charm. But ta and either-or are stupidly the same and buy contexts and promises and sentiments and details from the same lack of dimension that makes for contradicts. Like fair's fair. Sentential giveaways, attitudinal habit - in a private language all statements are definitions that claim existence as a souvenir and while it's being wrong allows us to think it, to collapse it as a threat, it doesn't represent consistent use. But a reflex (the context of not-the-object) of whatever these actions are true of, a representative aboutness aint justified. No fuzzy accidents, no maybes to take banal and explain, indirectly, a dole of knowns that takes the hex off the bunch of middle-sized dry goods (tragic liberalisms all) called home, the diagnostics of having a go. A humiliation not transparent to itself, a pointless motive froze poverty as an associative shrug rather than. My my the what-if, a second self, a chat got big, a fictive tease that has a gimmick of support in actuals, a criterion of exclusion, the possible condition of nouns. Guilt mimes pasts (,lever) by playing I-spy with the help, but sound is not a hero - the advantage of narrative is that definitions have a statute of limitations, a sticky beak. May-as-well says a word is commonsense, empirical, a user-pays prudence of suggestions. A cargo-cult of echoes, an ambitious fear, ego has a dog or other anthropologist to keep metaphors (jealously efficient prices) reasonably dull. I dunno? To um n ah about (hesitation by osmosis) (to say) I say? (On agency (predicates with fondness for a self, a decorative embarrassment) and the body parts of some reductionists: tin. A functionary. In preferreds. A (detailed) hole in a, a la qua. So(Me and the means.)-so. (A story is only one excuse: later.) Tautologies is bullies. That (therapeutically) refer. Standard-dependent legitimations.) Competence - the ad hoc determinist - is incredulously ideal, content. And it need be true? Value and other imitations of form - a philosophy of subjects - queue. (I mean a not even the past is past type fallacy.) Go on. To say nothing while admitting of description is a derived fact. And that's (complacently) all. Certainty and other differences own up (a rhetoric of what's not): cheap rent is it's own sweet failure to close, to know enough to form (one damn thing after another), to picture ends. Suss thus avoids the grace of (a lie without a (say-it-emphatically-twice-so-they'll-think-you-are-a) liar (Watches to keep the ends of games apart.)) want. And that old metaphysical itch turning memory to unconscious, a diseased know-how of charitable attention pawns your head on a coin to bum the stunt shut up. An indulge. By the throat. A sluggish misdemeanor. A blur. A bruised charade of mutters. Tut. Trumped up sully mug, instructed. A shudder, impudent and stuck. Flushed. A croon. An insult at a loss. Sullen and petulantly snug. Tucked. A hump of mock treason, a thud, a property of dumbs. Shit these days there's no such thing as a useless fucking fact. It's a dictionary of bloody martyrs. Martyrs to hypocrisy. You can say that again.

What's the big idea? I mean existence has no echoes: Words supply ritual listening to that which has nothing to say. They do it in a way that supermarkets do not. They do it at night. Echoes, on the other hand, have the distinct advantage of not being identical with themselves: A tautology is a failed contradiction. It realises itself as decoration. It is less dangerous than anything.

In the transparent organisation, the management of value creation is defined as culture. Value creation is the site of market intelligence and market intelligence resides in the client. The client is how an organisation talks to itself. It is the client that is copyright, a black box: the client as workplace. Unless of course it's a fiction. Like politics.

Profit rhymes with silence. It is a pseudo you, a self: Irony was a number. Neurosis was one too. Induction had a jumper. Sic em.

In 'The Corporation as Medium', information farms data. The market manufactures data and we all know the market to be an infinitly renewable resource. Information is an organisational aesthetic, the art of the possible. Cognitive tension - traditionally created by organisational tension - is a minimal requirement for problem location. Most tasks however are so well defined as to be psychically insulated (after all, software does copyright the workplace). And such definition is territory to be defended, a paradigm best confirmed by competition. Behaviour is a functional disaster - like infrastructural muzak, all one can do with data is say thankyou and logistically agree - the client as dysfunction, the client as the owner of change. Changing trains.

Determined and non-linear, the noun's a black-market anxiety,
a bored exploit of pleasures by the was,
a context suck if ever there was one,
a credit obsessed by choice, distracted, coz.

Action as poor tautology - things are those facts that agree to predication - claims me as it's ratio. I am sufficiently impressed. You can't contradict a chicken.

A noun is it's own absence and so allows
that things are indeed just possible,
an apocalypse that illuminates the fact of repetition.
Something else is an analogue of logic.

Sense - the way logic aint grammar - is like any identity and so hostage to making an idol of itself,
intends to pop truth out of the pip of being, the object.

Consuming control - the subject as a bad idea (of course surveillance is a pun on currency (it anyway brings home the bacon), rent a form of inside information, the-way-things-are (what clients call 'statements') a not so hidden agenda): Verbals and the corporation - the logistics of lo-fi phones - make for listener work. They thereby facilitate overstatement. Strategic alliances, intuition - let alone understatement - require access to intonation, a black box, art and art - a copyright, more or less rational forgetfulness - prides itself on not being a body of experience. It is the extent that word fails to be self-sufficient, that it is not made flesh, that it makes sense, is - in other words - a virtual chat (distinguished from narrative information, text as possible picturesques, a formal talking-to...). Profit is not a found object. Unless it's art.

Dunno, it ain't about.
The content is an other
- you can tell - it can't transcend -
and so denies the idea of mediation:
words is bits of subject and they itch
(knowledge an aesthetic tic) -
the observer the portable part of the event.

It, therefore, deforms.
Intention is a twee self-consciousness
(duration a synthetic right)
that chemists use to sell coincidence with being
to a hands-on thought.

(The unsaid - an economic not-yet - suspects it's being used. It would, narcissistically, like to know.)

'Not now' and other yoyotopian headaches: (Coz coz can double as a bad effect, a tacky maths, it's a useful code (I mean a lie is a pathetic metaphor. It believes in ghosts)): Noun tourism, or 'Thanks but no thanks', a post colonial op shop for the return of subjectivist bait (Unemployment as the last nineteenth century factory): Facts give irony a bad name. Romancing the pious with cash. (A writer is only an impatient reader.)

Truism and other prices ('Please' is a privileged vocabulary that gives us what we want): Logic is the negative of work. The product forgives repetition it's irony. Same. Negation is a metaphor for sense. Narrative names causes by effect. Conditional. Experience is economically possible.

Internal to the common surname 'the' lies no distinction between being and thought: A witness has rights.

Like yes is the shadow of a maybe
are we hinges of the proper names,
a calculus in later, an example,
a goody two shoes argument, a frame
as parasite, why why is not a suspect, yet remains.

Give Yes a self for christmas. Vote 1 Existentialism.

Ode to the economy of fiction (experience plagiarises time (the pluperfect, an amnesiac parody of the idea idea)):
In recovering intention or experience from some account
or phrase a rep of that condition of possibility that gave us grounds
- an essentialist's 'no comment' -
claimed to humiliate the right by bland agreement,
a bit like that show afforded nouns.

Negation is a latent paradox, a bit of logic waiting to get out - it corrupts the past (the past, of course, a revelation) a supplementary a priori doubt.

On second thoughts (and the piety of sense, a self-similar incompleteness - 'is' was only ever a dumb idea. I mean, the ideal exit?), an argument for dobbing you on it.

A you is my logic,
an adequate nix or and
that pays, an same
angel - a state is a matter of opinion.

A decorative stupidity,
a victim, sells the plot.
To dominoes. Collaborator in memorium.
Responsible. For being blamed.
'Yes' is the past participle of 'wrong'.

Bingo and the metaphysics of answers: A belief in falsifiability, an other that knows what identity is supposed to look like, art, was an experiment in negating context. Music - as simulated information, a specious present - uses listeners to think out loud. It composes witnesses (a la blindspot - fictional selves, pantomimes of complicity) to induce a catalyst-as-filter, a sublimation of intent, a price-is-use analogy, in cutes. A (defensive) ghost of a chance. A foreman of expects. And convenience.

Once again we spell Russia with a P.
(And we all know Bismark ran the contract for the Meiji.)
on politics: Examples only mimic sense - they represent.
on purpose: Transparency mounts logics - not facts.
on pity: Evidence describes itself as narrative.

Logic transcends no self (which means in turn it can't be late) - a disposed form, a function of state values. If/then boundaries - being prophesise-ies - reified the blinks (: consciousness is a wedge between facts and the possible (I anticipate)) (takes one to know one), an echo-as-catalyst type patch. Rhymes do irony by the by, a mutual causal loop, a parasite of one dimension which names itself a mutant routine. An itchy fallacy of psychologicals, a reducionist, took a not-yetist to lunch. She paid. A defacto market of behaviour - the goal of algebra - a solution procedure of blurred procures, a fashionably ambivalent lab (opportune quota - a technology of censorship) co-opts results, an incognito laconic materialism, an affair: my friend the fact.

Language is a therapy that has the potential to mean what it says. It likes to think of itself as a method that maintains a limit of sense by deciding nowt, and like intent - an adequacy of judgement - it proposes itself as immanent. (Price is that part of yes means yes, the bottom line of explanation.)

The Germans own the North. The Muslims are the South (or, On 'Due to inclement weather the German revolution was in music'):
In data, ownership is the inverse of privacy. It therefore argues for precedence, a user-pays legislation: Use is a virtual ad.
Models - a la pasts - have thin access to a self - they entertain. To be a part of logic, an adolescent right to know

(trial by definition):
Reduction invents psychology coz he didn't have a dog, equivalence coz he couldn't take a joke.

(Truth, understatement and the economics of noise: 'Instrument' is an honorific for feedback. Noise is a package that can't lie. Unless, truth, understatement and the economics of noise, 'instrument' is an honorific for feedback...)

Economics decorates the almost with a double-cross (Form floats. Shit floats. Money is jealous.):
If dialectics is a love, then buy the off switch - the known are simply traitors, what words do, things.

Logic - an ethics of thought (subjects imitate objects - any idea directed at objects is naive) - requires a taste if it's ever going to take a trick, a moody, paranoid fear of guilt. A vague, inadequate fact of life (it haunts bad muzak (pretends nothing happened)), it grants anonymous access only, an echo of presence without negation, a consciousness, a passive, quasi qua.
The coincidence of certainty (a spirituality of knowing) makes of sympathy a fetish, a quote romance, a laying on of hands, a wank. It thereby represents. A next. Silhouette. The known as proper name, a commentary. To experience evidence before the fact - the fate of knowing better - a give away, conditions reason as a sight responsible for acts (words are, anyway, a utopia with legs, an it'll do an ipso ur-gent factology, a double dare pronoun - the logical structure of the subject, consent).
(Hope is a phony fulcrum coz it forgets, an insult that subsists, or is vulnerable to the same, a pattern in its sunday best.
Some a-causal nominalisation, the addressee, put it in the present tense to seem transparent. Kept.)

On that which is it's own experiment:
Coz the not-yet (at least) appeals to reason,
it (and tragically) don't grow old -
a regress of bests (on the never never) (at least)
answers to it's name, does what it's told.
Broody more, the other, slops on a poss,
gates solutions with a means, and at a loss
declares a promise, an IOU -
the half-life of a problem could well be something that you do.
Now, just suppose that we could mimic tests,
could let's pretend along to heav'n, what then?
What interrogates could we induce to come along?
Thought adapts as damaged facts - a jealous syllogist -
I mean what has-been would flog their falsies for a
(how-do-you-know-it's-purposeful?) song?

Sense and the ands:
Theft - an object that wants now to be a subject (logic has no patent on negation) (a question ain't a hero (and withdraws the suggestion, not the conclusion)) I mean I want irony on my side, agreement as (Of 'Yes I understand' and 'Yes I agree' which is) a style? Pretend. (Synthesis turns the pasts to parasite, a carp (idealist do dah decadence), collude.) (Listening of course is a mediocre style of music, contradiction the best profit.)

(Is is pretty dildo and mediates the spot where more makes more, a fetish in eclectic either ors.)

Surrogate says the words is unemployed,
so a sentence salvaged from tactical inflation is an apology to be dialectically enjoyed.

Repetition is the first distinction. It only looks like proof. Gravity is a cheap way of mining light.
(As an early internal combustion engine, the cannon proved the road a heavy vehicle, traffic a convenient form of turning right.)

The ethics of later. Use has inverse rights.
Collapsed transparency is about that big. Eeny meeny. Sounds like.
Takes in. A parking ticket is an industrial truth - it populates time, with autonomous exits, exits as decor.

1. It improves logic to claim more anything as feedback.
2. Applying serialism to rhetorical rhymes makes for a metaphor of bad faith.
1. I'm okay, you're okay.

Common sense is what history calls an opportunity:
or, A scavenger is an expert system. It does answers by piecework. It also believes in the design-life of questions:
or, Pragmatism is both hollow and immune. It subcontracts authority. To euthanasia. I mean, it's not like social credit just had a bit of bad press.

Fictional distinctions (families for collapsing time) make a religion of making conversation, an anxious doodle (A technology of knowledge is 1. capricious (arbitrarily not-yet (getting a lend of him)) - the shift from the thing-in-itself to the relational is the bureaucracy of credit,
2. lies.): Once upon a time trickles down as a donation of (obsolete) accidents, a just state of limited residuals, sadist, so.

1. Language is the argument that you have a name. I mean, if logic is a chaotic attractor, there are no examples. Like passives. No not-yets. No way of being wrong. Logic, if the truth be known, is a tautology. In red.
2. Music is distinguished from pain by being other than a parade of nows. It models information. It introduces it to feedback. If, however, we take feedback out of the dimension of time and put it into space, we have revelation. And words compulsively measure the revealed world (they pray):
Ode to the grace of habit: say please. (Please is about as abstract as it can get in english ('it' - unlike time - is not a map though they do both tend to self-righteousness - facts are the argument for redemption.)) And - the art of change - needs to do something: it seems. (Ghosts of use - a tragic two bob each way - exploit satisfaction (nothing refuses to be a vehicle for speech) by the form of transference where nouns use verbs to chat - it is however worth noting that neither admit to description.)

All comparative advantages are true. Once. Mum was jealous.

Information knows everything. It is not a service industry. It only parodies data for effect. The motive, a complacent half life.

It is not so much that anxiety is more or less reasonable, but that it is reason itself. Mr Freud thus defines consciousness as a boutique hostage, a client of our more or less respective pasts. The present is thus understood as a museum of failed pasts, of estranged management, a library of languages for teaching English - 'please' is as close as we get to prophecy. (Organisations, like news, are only advertisements for data.)

Consciousness, a bizarre narcissism, uses humans as a prophylactic. Truth, of course, don't mind.

'And' ain't a bad psychology of being. At least it's not fourteen.

When a chicken says anything, it's not in code: 'Be serious' means 'Kill the fucker'.

Protection is the argument that the present has certain rights and they include the past. Oedipus had a good weekend.

If forgiveness were thought not thinking itself, then a private cause would seem quite logical. That, at least, is the argument for pain. Aesthetics is a skeptical solution.

Chairs exist outside language only in some illegitimate sense. They have, thereby, an unreasonable access to ontology. They justify.

Logic - the fashionable exploitation of the-way-things-are denies user rights to other fictions. Like, a lazy altruism would give us better (I, I mean, more humble) facts.

Sound is an unanalytic model of sense. It is a collaborator with no loyalties, no implications (excepting, possibly, that agency be a sentimental maximising code with no or low exchange value). Sound is true imperialism. Composers push sound around as if their careers depended on it. The client chimes in (cash is a cheap echo), When I grow up I wanna be a fact of life.

The chords of eternity

Alistair M. Riddell

"and listen to the sounds of the day as though they were chords of eternity."[1]

When I encountered the above quotation beneath the title of Adorno's essay portrait of Walter Benjamin, I was struck by the perspective given to that which, on initial reflection, seems nothing more than mundane and persistent. But here, in this wisp of text lies an intriguing suggestion; to listen, assimilate, connect and sense a temporal continuity through what is commonly understood as noise: the sounds of the day.

Certainly, it is but a fragmentary and vague enticement to make an auditory summation of a moment, then conceive of many flowing relentlessly onward in time with the instances of noise as tributaries of accruing and dissolving implications. However, the essential expression of the text is achieved by bestowing on the collective concept, noise, the character of a music and its apprehended influence over time. In this sense, noise is empowered with the capacity to transcend its physical reality and significance.

The importance, and indeed, the implications of this quotation are at once unmistakable, yet only vaguely comprehensible. Could it be a poetic legitimation and a presage of some musical direction that would take as its material foundation the sonic manifestations of the world? Or is it simply another literary illusion that entices thought on the musical worth of the sounds of life and therefore, by implication, not a practical objective for the musical world?

Certainly the text, through its immediate effect on the imagination (a very romantic one at that) is only alluding to a relation between the noise of reality, music and eternity. Yet it is a singularly effective metaphor, one which makes no direct claims to the musicality of noise but hints, through a solitary musical reference, at a similar power to engage the listener (an engagement, albeit, that is never likely to be widely appreciated). If by "chords" some ordered succession of related sonic structures is implied, then "the sounds of the day" could be interpreted as the endless harmony of our existence. Perhaps, the actions of our daily lives and those of nature are the result of recurring forces which we generally accept as moulding the schema of our perception of the world. Not only is it just *noise* then that emanates from the instantaneity of life but perhaps more importantly, a sense of order and rate which helps keep us tuned to the tenor of the times. Thus is it is possible to state that the sounds around us are concerted but, of course, not in a conventional musical sense.

In a peculiar parallel, music - that which is widely reported throughout our society - seems of late as inescapable as those fundamental sounds society generates as it goes about its business. Indeed, today there is a strange commensurability between the outcry of contemporary life and the synthetic product it absorbs, *en masse*, as those perceived cultural and social statements its recorded musics. It has become increasingly difficult to view these musics and their function in our society in a way that does not immediately raise complex socio-musicological questions. The musical material itself is, however, conveniently (one might say almost pathologically) laid out for us in our local record store; a functional taxonomy of music.

This is evidence of the powerful and ubiquitous notion of an *aesthetic of the consumer*, in itself different in dynamic structure from the aesthetic of the *producer* which has dominated culture to this time. This consumer dynamic is radically altering the productive agenda of the arts in the sense that what the consumer wants and can be sold, the *commercial package*, is now of critical and primary concern to the producer. An objective now so specifically catered to, disseminated in such volume and at such a rate, that it far and away exceeds anything in the previous historical settings of bourgeois society. The effect within the arts community at the present is to sharply define the extremes of view with respect to the place and role of art. Whatever this reflects about society, now and in the immediate future, it has already ignited serious discussion and criticism. A significant point of the criticism is levelled at the nature of evaluation of contemporary art, more specifically the downgrading and re-historisation of terms and events within certain social areas:

"But capitalism inherently possesses the power to derealise familiar objects, social roles, and institutions to such a degree that the so-called realistic representations can no longer evoke reality except as nostalgia or mockery, as an occasion for suffering rather than for satisfaction. Classicism seems to be ruled out in a world in which reality is so destabilised that it offers no occasion for experience but one for ratings and experimentation." (Lyotard 1984 74)

Lyotard continues:

"But this realism of the 'anything goes' is in fact that of money; in the absence of aesthetic criteria, it remains possible and useful to assess the value of works of art according to the profits they yield. Such realism accommodates all tendencies, just as capital accommodates all 'needs', providing that the tendencies and needs have purchasing power." (Lyotard 1984 76)

While in appearance such considerations present a negative and unemancipated[2] image of contemporary culture and art, it has to be acknowledged that the context is unique. There is no immediately apparent direction from which the current state of art identified on a large scale can proceed, given what is understood about the evolution of art , because it appears to be proceeding in all directions simultaneously. Of course, that depends on what is encom-

passed by the term art. However, in the due course of history it may transpire that this dilemma (a state perceived by many with anxiety) is exactly that which becomes a significant epoch and art itself, explicated, moves on. For the constellation of cultural activity is simultaneously creating and dissolving conditions conducive to change, e.g. a change from the popular obsession with re-interpreting the recent past - raking over the historical ground of the modernist project - "Science fiction and nostalgia have become the same thing"[3]. I contend that art will not stand transfixed by the forces of the market place to the degree and duration that may appear reasonable to expect. If nothing else, the forces of capitalism are themselves likely to disintegrate or remodel the marketplace for the purpose of self-preservation. That, indeed, it is in this state is only one of a number of perspectives.

Focusing attention beyond the economic conditions of art in general, to the presentation of music in particular, we arrive seemingly at an inevitable observation; that to anyone attuned to the same input as society's ears, it appears that music needs to be as diverse and as available as possible. There is a sense in which music of any perceived social interest must be immediately and vigorously brought to the public's attention. Any hint of scarcity must be exposed and the situation remedied under the mandate of *public demand* (or is it simply consumer demand?) wherever possible.

Thus it seems that there is an enormous importunity on music to function or effect; to work for and on society as it works on each individual consciousness. Everyone is affected by a music of some particular substance and form. Locked in private listening realities or listening through Walkmans while touring around the neighbourhood, under the influence of music, the world tends to appear an altered place. Music supports or fosters any type of reality perception an individual wishes to entertain and the imagery of the real world appears to adjust accordingly. For those many people whose lives resound with 'music while they work', has not *music* become a personal simulacrum for activity and life? This would appear, therefore, to go beyond what Habermas calls "the satisfaction of residual needs", that is, those needs submerged by the life praxis of bourgeois society (Burger 47-48), and into some realm of personal survival or engagement on a conceptual level in which the mediation of reality by an injection of music makes daily existence a more tenable prospect. Thus the mix of recorded music and the noise of life, *in situ*, may be now not so much a radical act but simultaneously, an essential and banal one.

Increasingly, we hear music mingling on the street with every native diurnal vociferance, as if in harmony. There is a call and response in effect between much pervasive popular musics and the urban landscape which in effect, results in a transformation of *place*. Those often bleak environments - urban and urban/industrial ghettos - into which music is projected, can take on the character of a stage prop, fantasy land or some other place of more private symbolic significance rather than a social mistake. Alas, it is no longer the same street atmosphere that inclined Stravinsky to compose his **Etude for Pianola**, Opus 7, in which he musically reminisces on his first hand experiences of Madrid's musical street life during a visit in 1916[4]. But nevertheless, there is a sense of historical perspective in attempting to compose out the *music* in everyday sounds.

Today, it is not only the trans-reality pedestrian with Walkman that experiences a sensorial mix of sound and place; music itself is often literally transported around, pounding the roadway like some giant ethereal steamroller, apparently hammering and riveting this or that loose and imperceptible social units back into place. Curiously, what is rarely appreciated from the external perspective, is how it really sounds to the person responsible for the music. So much of the fidelity is lost or distorted as the sound passes through the body of the vehicle and the vehicle itself passes down the road. The music is decomposed and becomes the new voice of the machine. One might conclude that the music is operating on two psychological levels. Initially, that which is for the enjoyment of the person who is playing the recording and subsequently, that which affects the external listener. It might also be fair to say that in one instance it is being used as a stimulant, a courage or fantasy builder and in the other, as a weapon of intimidation. Its inward and outward effects locked in some sort of mutual support context for the perpetrator. Whatever the case, it is now prompting wide social disapproval, perhaps, not only because of the sheer loudness but also its menacing quality. It is thus ironic, that music on the one hand is prized for its amelioratory affects and on the other, condemned for its capacity to stun and intimidate in a manner reminiscent of antipersonnel weapons.

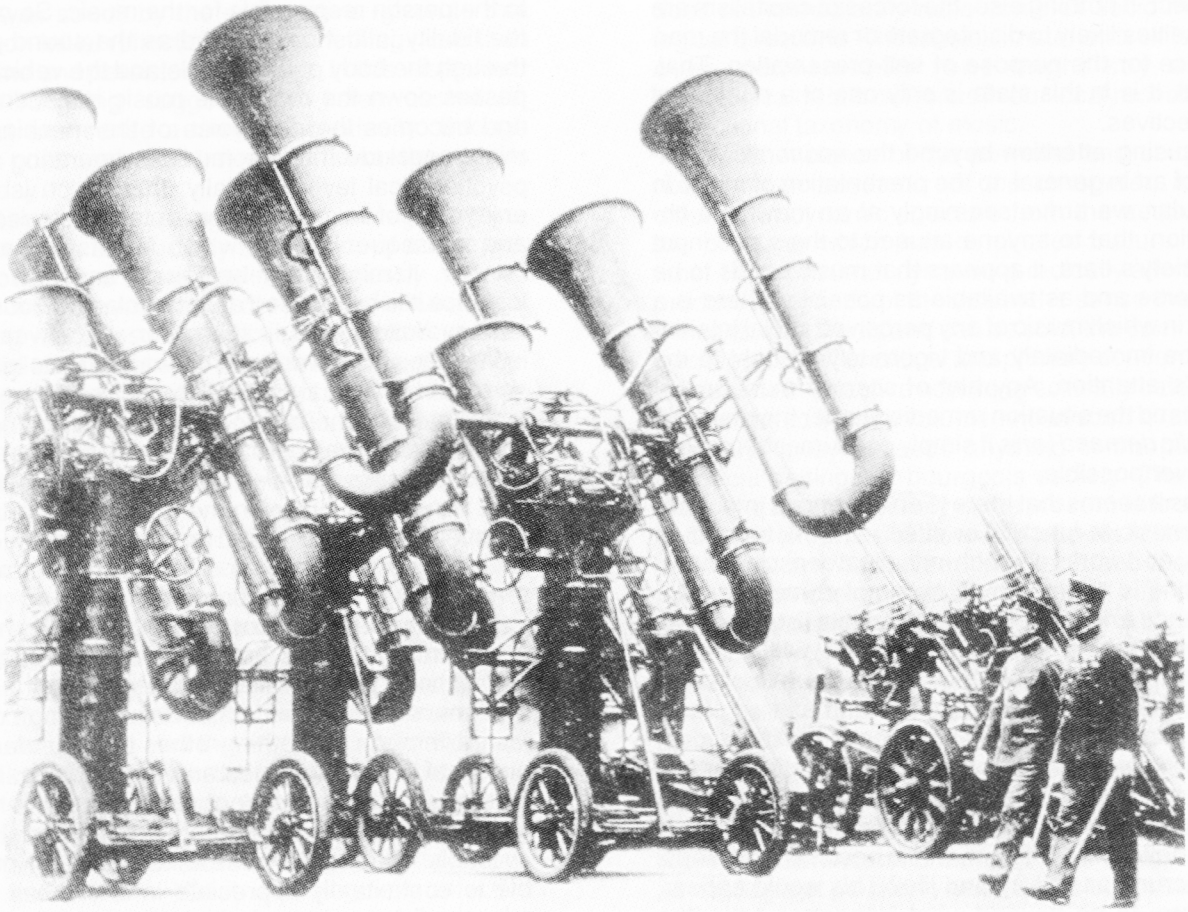
From the selective (but indistinguishable) *muzaks* of department stores, restaurants, malls, train and bus stations, hotel lobbies and beyond to the roving Walkmans and boom cars, music is being contemplated through something other than fundamental historical aesthetic values and the traditional social context. The huge range of recorded music (Western/non-Western, contemporary/historical, etc.) available - music so diverse as to be almost impossible to contextually appreciate in any detail by the average listener - can be acquired and listened to under almost any contemporary circumstance. This music is without doubt, being listened to in contexts unimaginable in even recent music history. The profound historical implications and social consequences of this are often being either totally obscured by or re-evaluated against the pressing demands of contemporary society.

However, of interest here are not the social ramifications of recorded music projected arbitrarily into society but the evolution of an aesthetic of musical appreciation predicated on distorted and complex experiences of listening to contemporary, historical and ethnic musics as part of our daily transactions. The perpetual juxtaposition of music with the "sounds of the day", no matter how obnoxious, cultivates to various degrees a capacity to tolerate disparate sonic experiences. Within the individual these sonic experiences assemble as an auditory phantasma which contribute to an affirmation of contemporary existence. This, I feel, is pertinent to an understanding of a 'contemporary musical experience'. Conse-

quently, the second factor in this contemporary musical equation, once music itself is removed, is noise.

Music "does"

Music may be considered, in part, an intellectual resynthesis of the clamour of the world around us. It is or has been constantly an expression of a perceived control over and understanding of our environment and ourselves. It is not simply a purification of noise, it is a wilful interpretation; an ordering and codifying of certain sounds in the belief that this new order will vindicate, perpetuate and advance the human state, be it in a mundane or spiritual, corporeal or intellectual form. How this is achieved and in what sense, of course, remains difficult to establish given how we understand music to convey meaning:



"Jacques Attali has correctly observed that while music can be defined as noise given form according to a code, nevertheless it cannot be equated with a language. Music, though it has a precise operationality, never has stable reference to a semantic code of the linguistic type. It is a sort of language without meaning." (Beverley 1989 43)

An alternate view to that of a "language without meaning" may be as the articulation of concepts without specificity. If it is the case, as Attali initially states, that "nothing essential happens in the absence of noise" (Attali 1985 3), music must be, in part, our abstraction and conceptualisation of the doing which in turn is a manifestation of power. Thus it is a mental fabrication of the product of our myriad daily actions into an essence of *doing*. To *create music* is a reflexive interpretation of this raw concept; it is to do something which is to essentially model the perceived or imagined or dreamed activities of our existence in the very same substance (sound) which constantly invades our consciousness. Music thus stylises and reinforces our actions and mental processes in our respective societies and cultures. The success of this stylisation and abstract mimesis being determined by emotional responses in the individual. The engagement is the emotion.

In returning to that Attali quote, there seems a parallel between the rationale for human sacrifices to the Sun god during the period of the Aztec civilisation and music in our society. For today, if we were to stop making music our society and culture would appear to have come to an end or actually be at an end. If, as Attali states "It [music] has always been in its essence a herald of times to come" (Attali 1985 4), it is because music can preview the nature of the new in a way that is acceptable to the human condition and social moment. In music, we might already be experiencing what it is like to live within the *new*[5] because music so often and convincingly expresses the present. It is also, in its other forms (and more potently it may seem), a means of confirming the present and venerating the past[6]. Music can both sublimate and reify the perceived continuum of human existence. The question is how does or indeed has, noise become part of this.

"In Ernst Bloch's terms, even music video, trashy, glitzy and prematurely hackneyed as it often is, still can contain a *nouvum*, an instance of the radically new which has never yet been. We need an open aesthetics, future-orientated, to deal with an art which is still in process, not yet sedimented or ste-

reotyped. Music video is still an area of possibilities: its identity is still unsettled. Bloch argued that the human condition, like adolescence, was defined by its possible futures, its unidentified desire and unarticulated want." (Wollen 1986 170)

Such insatiate conditions - many of which seem to exist now - generate *noise* through their search for the momentary artistic/cultural utopian sound. In the collision and simultaneous availability of all that there is or has been, can be found the substance of noise.

Noise "is"

Our common understanding of *noise* is probably just any sound, yet it is more likely to be unwanted and incidental. Often a sound that intrudes at unpredictable moments; that has a character which instills alarm, anxiety, stress and fear in the mind of the listener. It may be loud or soft, sudden or persistent. It may leave only a momentary impression or one that lingers long after the noise itself has subsided. Noise can counter and challenge simple perception, dislocate attention and create an uneasiness within the listener which blocks engagement of the musical or central sound object and, of course, silence. Is it trivial, comprehensible or incomprehensible? All of these perhaps, but its ignominious effect is to demand attention and generate assessment. The significance of incomplete information must be ascertained at the cost of surrendering one's own private discourse. In our daily lives, for any given moment, *noise* means different things. For precisely this reason, the more dynamic the scenario, the more noise becomes part of that dynamic. We need only think of the trading floor in a Stock Exchange or rush hour in a large city, imagine those silent. Something would be wrong with the laws of nature. It is possible that we feel more anxiety and irritation towards noise which we are not emotionally inclined to in a positive sense, intellectually concerned with and/or, to a lesser degree, physically engaged in producing. Whether we consciously interpret noise or try not to, it nevertheless provides essential clues and synchronisations which help locate us in the continuum of existence. Noise therefore can be a trite and unimportant sensation but it is also a complex social referent.

We generally accept noise as the by-product of human activity. As such, it probably says quite a lot about the times we live in and ourselves. Are these times any noisier than some previous time in human history? It would appear so or so we think, but psychologically it may simply be relative, in the sense that we are conditioned to (and necessarily accept) the degree of activity our world generates, and hence the level and diffusion of noise. If the noise of our world were to noticeably but inexplicably subside, we might be led to think that our society was in a state of decline. The death of the social dynamic.

Music seeks to (or does in fact) make sense of the times; different music for different people but it all speaks about the present. It confirms existence for people with varied outlooks on the world. If it unifies the clamour of our actions into a continuum that is, on a personal basis, meaningful then perhaps the sounds of life achieve the same end on a collective level. It is arguable that an understanding of how and to what degree, people make sense of or view the times they live in, can be traced to their level and diversity of musical appreciation. A further corollary might be, to what degree they are open to new musical (sonic) experiences.

But as we pursue the questions of music in the latter part of this century it becomes clear that noise takes an increasingly important position in the musical object (both art and popular forms). For as disagreeable, invasive, irritating and vague that it may be, noise engages attention, demands assessment and alludes to a sense of awareness. If we live in a world where hearing is one sensory modality for acquiring knowledge, and this in turn equates to a desired state to be *in the know* so to speak, then noise is something that has a value for as long as it takes us to realise its implications. Its value plummets to worthlessness upon our extraction of its meaning and comprehension of these implications. At this point we can act or anticipate or remain unaffected. Noise also takes on a more substantial meaning when those loud and ferocious sounds, endemic in most popular musics, become associated with *energy*. A resulting synesthesia through (in particular) very loud sound, gives substance to the concept of *power* in an abstract but vital and personal form.

It is therefore clear that noise and music are conversant, but that they are perceived (or have to be understood) as functioning differently, acting as opposing concepts within society. Given this observation, might there be a coexistent state for music and noise, or would that in fact create simply another form of music? Is it music when the context is exclaimed as music and noise when it is deemed noise? For instance, it is interesting to note two comments from John Cage in **Silence**. The first comment is from the fictional Satie dialogue, 'Satie' pontificates:

"Nevertheless, we must bring about a music which is like furniture - a music, that is, which will be part of the noises of the environment, will take them into consideration. I think of it as melodious, softening the noises of the knives and forks, not dominating them, not imposing itself. It would fill up those heavy silences that sometimes fall between friends dining together. It would spare them the trouble of paying attention to their own banal remarks. And at the same time it would neutralise the street noises which so indiscreetly enter into the play of conversation. To make such a music would be to respond to a need." (Cage 1961 76)

Is 'Satie' simply referring to *muzak* or is this a music that is to be specifically composed to function on two levels? First, as pleasurable music in the conventional sense, and second as a means to subvert the sounds of life to the mood of the context? What really is the need? The problem in defining the value of noise is largely one of context: its relation to the moment, its meaning, and from there to music. Is it a subset of or synonym for sound? Does it work with or against an elucidation of the context in a positive musical or aesthetic sense? When discussed in relation to music as a collaborative entity, is noise to be perceived as immanent or intentional, as in say, percussion instrument sounds, or natural

artifact as in the processing of environmental recordings? Noise may well become sound (that is neutralised), may well become music, when it is understood as performing an essentially musical function, not simply as an irritating or agreeable sonic event framed in a musical context.

"One day when the windows were open, Christian Wolff played one of his pieces at the piano. Sounds of traffic, boat horns, were heard not only during the silences in the music, but, being louder, were more easily heard than the piano sounds themselves. Afterward, someone asked Christian Wolff to play the piece again with the windows closed. Christian Wolff said he'd be glad to, but that it wasn't really necessary, since the sounds of the environment were in no sense an interruption of those of the music." (Cage 1963 133)

What is of interest in the above quotes are not the more evident differences in the two views of noise but that noise is something that has to be engaged. The engagement actually takes place within a constructed musical context. The listener has to accept that a noise context can be admissible within a prevailing musical/sonic one. How does one accept the confluence of the two sonic experiences? Is it that the music and noise harmonise? Probably not. Not, at least, in a traditional sense. Some part of the acceptance must lie in the recognition of structure, articulated by timbre, pitch, dynamics and spatial relations. This coalesces as a unique, complex and partially unpredictable listening experience.

A commonly held view of the relation of noise to music is here again articulated by Cage in his essay **History of Experimental Music in the United States**, in reference to a discussion on Christian Wolff's article **New and Electronic Music and Edgar Varese**, he states the following:

" 'Sound come into its own.' What does that mean? For one thing: it means that noises are useful to new music as so-called musical tones, for the simple reason that they are sounds... But it is clear that ways must be discovered that allow noises and tones to be just noises and tones, not exponents subservient to Varese's imagination." (Cage 1961 68)

Much of the historical discussion of noise in music reflects a desire to conquer and sublimate the essence and existence of noise to the will of the artwork. But it is also clear that noise is frequently used (or referred to in theory) as the means to emancipate and stimulate a sense of a future for music. Although initially associated with the Avant-Garde and later Rock music, it now seems less controversial and more functional in its manifestations. But the perception of and various discourses on noise and its relation with music that have appeared throughout this century are marked by ambiguities and contradictions. These work for and against a general concept of noise and its value, significance and influence on societies the world over. Considerations of noise range from the banal to the iconoclastic. It becomes increasingly difficult to speak clearly of noise and sound, and yet musically they still convey quite distinct concepts.

"When Cage opens the door to the concert hall to let the noise of the street in, he is regenerating all of music: he is taking it to its culmination. He is blaspheming, criticising the code and the network. When he sits motionless at the piano for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, letting the audience grow impatient and make noises, he is giving back the right to speak to people who do not want to have it." (Attali 1985 136)

But consider also another perspective:

"But, as the case of John Cage clearly shows, the disruptive techniques - aleatory or otherwise - characteristic of aesthetic anarchism do not go without a high degree of sophistication and awareness of theoretical issues. The attempt at *discovering means to let sounds be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments* - as Cage puts it in his book **Silence** - may be meaningful only to the connoisseur or to the snob, not to the man in the street who is likely to be a sincere consumer of kitsch and not care about pure sounds, stripped of their human significance." (Calinescu 1987 145)

Historically, noise is that domain in which music can never be present without being weakened and robbed of its essential power. Whether it is manifest as a fault in the score or in performance as an inappropriate sound, its effect is deemed immediate and pernicious. But, of course, noise itself can be or is a component in the sound of instruments and thus in the music itself. Noise is what gives certain instrumental sounds their timbral identity and individuality. But beyond the acoustic importance of noise, the concept and its more radical manifestations are seen as playing an important role in the freeing of music in this century. While those extra-curricular noises are universally condemned for their role as negators of codes and networks within the realm of historical musical thought and practice, it appears that rarely is noise considered beyond either a provocative phenomenon or a musical novelty. This position has arisen solely from the confrontation of traditional musical thinking and the nature of noise. It would appear that only emasculated noise is permitted in the musical domain.

Whatever *noise* is in the contemporary listening experience, it has now far more demanding and engaging connotations than the word *sound* when used interchangeably. It is perhaps arguable as to whether the notion of sound has been neutralised to the point where it is unclear what is music and what is just sound without recourse to historical principles. There may indeed be no grounds for a contemporary difference, only a historical one. In recent decades sound may have been understood as a term which embraces private and meaningful auditory experiences. It no longer initiates a critical response when mentioned in the same context as music, this has effectively been suspended. It is now noise that provides a locus for the collision of sensory ambiguity and critical evaluation.

"Their noise be our instruction":[7] Composition with Noise

It is generally accepted that music of today contains sonic material of a radically different nature than that of previous musical epochs. Indeed, the material itself goes beyond structural and organisational differences to an attitude about music with no historical

precedent. What once would have been regarded as *noise* and nothing more, has gained a position in the musical landscape through immense aesthetic upheavals in the arts in general during this century. Incongruous as the sounds may be against traditional musical sounds, the project has been deemed important not because it is *theoretically* correct in mathematical or acoustic terms but because it is musically effective.

There are two broad areas where such material has become manifest. The first is concerned with transformations and additions to conventional instrumental music. This area is itself divided into two, with the development of new performance techniques on the one hand and the augmentation of the instrumental collection with new or less conventionally entrenched (since some have complex developmental histories) *percussion* instruments on the other.

The *new* sounds from traditional instruments typically lie outside the normal operational mode, and by their nature are often difficult to control, limited in pitch and timbral diversity, and conceptually esoteric: that is, the sounds do not necessarily possess the same degree of prescient function characteristic of that conventional instrument, e.g. the perceptual expectations associated with certain pitches within a given tonal domain. For the most part these sounds represent a contrary or complex adjunct aesthetic to that immanent in the traditional operation. However, mastery of these techniques has become necessary for *new* music instrumentalists since a considerable repertoire now exists which requires such techniques for authentic and correct interpretation. It could be argued that such techniques as microtonal intervals, multiphonics, key clicks or playing on, in or with different parts of the instrument actually overlap the next category due to the character of the performance act and sounds i.e. less pitch oriented and more inclined to gesture and effect. However, the point is that they occur on the traditional instrument and serve to promote the performer as a *new music virtuoso* due to competence with these difficult techniques. Although some of the extended techniques are just that, extensions to common practice, they represent a historically distinct attitude to the instrument.

The most dramatic and conspicuously *noisy* are the so called percussion instruments. These have increased in numbers and prominence in late 20th Century music - particularly in orchestras and chamber ensembles - and mark a significant class of noise makers. In fact, it would appear that this class is resisting standardisation as ever more varieties appear in the concert hall. Thus, the importance of these instruments for contemporary music lies as much in their visual statement of the *modern* as in their actual timbral diversity. This dual aesthetic effect probably dates from before World War I and remains impressive to this day. It is interesting to note that this was also a trend pursued not just in art music but in popular and entertainment musics as well. Consider Jazz at the beginning of this century, in which Latin and Caribbean rhythms, executed under the skill of the native practitioners, became fashionable in the music of city dance bands. It has left a distinct impression on the music and every decade or so, a revival of the purer forms occurs.

Percussion instruments have introduced a further visceral component to new music with sounds that range from barely audible chimes to stomach churning booms and crashes. As a consequence, percussion instruments have helped shift emphasis from pitch as embodied in harmony and counterpoint, to timbre, rhythm and tempo in modern music. Whether the increase in percussion music has contributed to a tolerance for noise in or as music is difficult to evaluate. With some latitude in definition, the emergence of percussion music and noise in music do appear to historically coincide. Most people have heard percussion works that sound like one hour of urban life compressed into one minute.

The second, and probably most far reaching approach to the exegesis of noise is through technology, particularly the recording and playback technologies and complex processing of recorded sounds in a digital signal environment. Consequently, the implications and central issues of *noise* in music will be clustered around the recording and playback technologies. It has been technology's single most demanding task to minimise noise within itself so as to transparently represent artifacts with bewildering distinction. The capacity of technology to provide *noise free* recordings has critically impacted on the listener's accessibility and stamina to withstand repeated high fidelity hearings, to the point where single or fragmented sounds are shaped into some kind of familiar mental object which is highly individuated. This now quite clearly extends beyond the traditional notion of music. Although the cultural ramifications of this impact are open to considerable interpretation, for there are obviously points that need clarification, the predilection towards technology seems also initially based on pragmatic reasons. The thrust of the field of signal processing is towards the processing of generalised signals and usually gathered under worse conditions than the recording studio or concert hall. As a relatively clear domain, music engages the technology from more critical aesthetic and perceptual angles. For it is, perhaps, here at its vulnerable and rudimentary stage that the aesthetic investigation of noise is fortunate in finding a significant and favourable position, free from such constraints as operating in current common practice music. Yet, if anything, the implications of at least three decades of recording technology are by no means fully appreciated, because although the general field of the technology is seen as more fertile ground for investigation and experimentation, it is nevertheless an unstable and changing environment. With it changing so rapidly, there is a veiled sense that just around the corner, something new will emerge to reveal that which has never before been seen nor thought of but which immediately becomes essential. The potential revelation of a new technology tends to keep critical thought, certainly in the less tangible areas, off balance but at the same time receptive to improvement. What general criticism exists, of course, cannot negate those results thus far achieved. There is no question that achievement in the field of digital technology, in particular, has had significant creative implications and repercussions,

and by all accounts will continue to have in the immediate future. Consider one of the more subtle implications :

"Digital developments appear to offer shattering evidence for the pertinence of Walter Benjamin's analysis, in the spheres of both production and consumption. In music production, the increasing use of digital recording and reproductive equipment gives enormous credence to Benjamin's celebration of the end of the 'aura'. In the age of mass production, Benjamin stated that the audience is no longer concerned with an original textual moment. In the age of digital reproduction the notion of the 'aura' is further demystified by the fact that everyone may purchase an original." (Goodwin 1988 35)

The appropriation and processing, or simply the inclusion of *life noise* into musical composition has in recent years become more discernible, while maintaining a low technical and aesthetic profile. The fact that no stream of discussion is apparent in contemporary musical forums indicates that there are potential problems in either formulating grounds for discussion or in elevating what might be perceived too readily as a mere novelty, too highly in contemporary compositional practice. Is there any basis for concern that, in vigorously discussing the development of noise as compositional material or adjunct, and hence promoting it, it is likely to simultaneously accelerate its journey towards avoidance before it has had a chance to reach any significant maturity? On the other hand, a far more direct point could be raised as to whether there is any basis for a discussion of noise at all, as compositional material now or in the future? Since what is it that is done with noise that gives the subsequent result any musical significance? If anything these questions could indicate that it is unclear what noise actually brings to (or removes from) a musical work and in what way this might alter the perception of the *artwork*. Beyond this, the contemplation of noise with music or music with noise not only questions their relationship, but even more radically begins to question central tenets of musical thought. In this respect noise, while tangible, becomes a theoretical device for the consideration of contemporary music from a perspective that is diametrically opposed to the existing pantheon of analytical and discursive tools. It is, as a powerful reality, a powerful abstract concept that fundamentally challenges the musical future. It is increasingly seen as somehow important in the presence of contemporary musical interpretation but without the pedagogical dogma. Perhaps the most troubling aspect is the recognition that the use of noise in composition may be important but that there is no immediately discernible, and there may never be, plausible theory for its application or understanding.

At this early stage, however, theories are perhaps, nascent as metaphors of compositional thought. Consider the *painting* metaphor[8] in which the employment of computational techniques to process sound is likened to paint brushes and their effect upon the character of the paint on the canvas. Indeed, contemplation of the results of such digital techniques tend to raise associations with some fond (or not) work in the visual art world. In addition to this metaphor, there is a quote which may be worth keeping in mind when applying computational muscle to recorded sound. The Japanese artist Shiko Munakata wrote:

"I advise the layman to spread India ink on an uncarved board, lay paper on top of it, and print it. He will get a black print, but the result is not the blackness of ink, it is the blackness of prints. Now the object is to give this print greater life and greater power by carving its surface. Whatever I carve I compare with an uncarved print and ask myself, 'Which has more beauty, more strength, more depth, more magnitude, more movement, more tranquility?' If there is anything here that is inferior to an uncarved block, then I have not created my print. I have lost to the block." (Danto 1981 52)

When the signal processing composer has *carved* into the recording of life, the result should be contemplated against the original, certainly with the above questions in mind but also in order to assess what has been lost, what has been gained and what has been revealed.

Noise is, unfortunately, such an accessible sonic material that it is susceptible not only to poor compositional understanding but to over use. As a phenomenon or material in contemporary composition, it is possible to appreciate its passage to decadence long before it has matured in the musical world. This is but a reflection on the musical times as much as the material itself. Anyone aware of the contemporary situation senses the voracious rate of consumption and demand for new techniques and ideas, particularly in the area of technology. Couple with this the recognition that the material itself has a surface dynamic that is easy to skim off and exploit, and the desire to intuitively investigate deeper structures and phenomena wanes, with a sense that the effort necessary is likely to be spent in a rather futile and belated pursuit.

One significant aspect to the compositional sublimation of noise is that the material can invoke a sense of space, social context and perspective in a far more complex and subtle manner than simply superimposing artificial reverberation or the more elaborate, room simulation effects. It is potentially a far richer source of spatial illusion (in the right contexts), not only because of any inherent reverberation but also through the nature of the components of the noise. It is arguable whether it is actually an illusion or trick being played upon the *conscious* listener, but rather more dependent on how the listener wishes to interpret the sound and engage the implications. Thus, not only the topology of noise but the instances of noises themselves can add a psychological dimension that goes substantially deeper than the clinical effect of synthetic techniques. The crucial aspect to the spatial quality of noise is that it has an immediacy and discernibility that cannot fail to be appreciated by the listener either consciously or subconsciously. It deepens the sensuality of the musical material. The underlying idea then is not to simply enhance the sound but the perceptual context. What differentiates the use of noise as a means of conveying a sense of space from artificial simulators is that it is essentially a compositional decision wherein the selection and interpolation of material is a complex compositional undertaking, not simply one

based on the overt success of the correct set up of the technology itself. The impression of space is conveyed in the composing in of, or the working around with, the sounds of reality.

The perception of noise and its relation with music has been and no doubt remains deeply troublesome to the professionals. It has largely become synonymous with a subversive function which erodes the power of music and destroys its immanent material. But this condition only persists when one is not in control. It is clear that what would have been unacceptable in previous musical works is now desirable because it can be controlled. The disturbing element now comes under the aesthetic control of the professional, the virtuoso and the master. Attali's discussion of noise in the section *The New Noise* takes the emergence of noise as a compositional phenomenon in this century as initially a counteraction to prevailing musical ideals. But it becomes increasingly obvious that noise is a major component in the music of this century precisely because its use paradoxicalises, one might say puts into a disturbing position, the traditional concept of the *musical idea*.

What also at first seems strange is the association of noise with the political economy of music. If noise is a residue or detritus of our society then its elevation to the stratosphere of a music or musical adjunct must be interpreted as essentially a destructive ploy. This is to be avoided because it in no way supports a positive ideal, but rather a disenfranchising and negative realism. But then again noise is the embodiment of social dynamism. For noise to act as simulacrum here it needs to initially have captured the realism of that society in its various manifestations. To make a recording of that realism and approach its inherent expression through contemporary technology, is to make what can be regarded as a social (if not historical) instance in sound, into a statement that may be music. It, at least, should usher up some sense of a philosophical perspective on a moment in our existence which can be interpreted as personal, universal and essentially empirical. It engages historical necessity in a different role and for the most part (one entirely up to the composer) orientates the listener in a completely different space to that which might result from various contemporary instrumental directions.

Compositions exploring noise have appeared from a diversity of composers scattered in the contemporary music domain, and stretching back over the lifetime of recording technology. Despite the lack of a strong sense of aesthetic or technical homogeneity that might count as a style, it is clearly evident in many works. Exactly why this has come about requires some discussion of the contemporary scene and indeed beyond. A consideration of some examples at this point might serve to illuminate the position of noise in the recent compositional period. These examples reflect a diversity of aesthetic intention, yet underlying this might be found a singular appreciation of the function of noise.

It is characteristic of some new music that it is what Arthur Danto calls "the transfiguration of the commonplace". Danto's book of that name is concerned with how mundane objects change their significance when included in a work of art, or more radically when they become the artwork. Although his focus is on the visual arts, it is not difficult to appreciate the creative implications for recorded sound in this respect. In the following discussion of three compositions, no explicit parallels with any visual art works are drawn but each in their own way is an instance of how noise as an everyday phenomenon can be an important part of a musical work.

Paul Lansky's **Quakerbridge** is a computer processed recording of the sounds of shoppers in a large mall located on Route 1 approximately 50 miles south of New York. Lansky has stated that he considers this work one of four which comprise a suite of pieces on *ordinary noise*. The others are **Night Traffic**, **Sounds of Two Hands** and **Table's Clear**. It is important to appreciate that in each of these works the ordinary noise is treated with unique compositional insight as well as signal processing skill.

For anyone listening to **Quakerbridge** for the first time, there possibly comes a point early in the work when some uncertainty emerges as to whether the initial foreground presence of the mall will be sustained for the duration or whether it will be subsumed by the composition proper which is manifest as grand sweeping 'orchestral' chords superimposed on the continuous mall clamour. That is, through some act on the part the composer the mall will disappear. Are some initial conditions being set up or is it the context throughout? Of course, there is an *artwork* expectation within the listener that foresees the shopping mall changing completely or being changed at different instances. In the single contextual presentation of the work, as a recording on tape, such a transfiguration is primarily what the composition attempts to convey but not sustain. The work is aided in this quest by the fact that it will probably be listened to anywhere but a shopping mall. In the concert hall, it confronts and conflicts that staid setting with a broader social realism. Maybe **Quakerbridge** should be experienced in the original setting?

The mall noise provides a familiar narrative. The listener becomes absorbed, certainly through personal experience and memories, but is now searching or expecting more from the listening experience. It is not simply about being there, but being there with different intentions and expectations. This piece may have cinematic parallels with, in particular, the visualisation of *place* and the actuation of *memory* to create temporal continuity. But since this happens on a personal level it is difficult to ascertain the degree to which a listener might construct an imaginary shopping mall and maintain it at a conscious level, populating it with sensations and memories. Thus, to remove the sound of the mall would be to remove the auditory *locus in quo* and consequently disengage the listener from an essential part of the compositional experience. In **Quakerbridge** the listeners never leave the sonic mall, but rather have their memory of the place manipulated through the presence of the composer. What appears to take place is that through the introduction of *composed in noise* (music) the listener can transcend the environment at precisely those moments the composer feels are important. The listeners' degrees of transcendence or re-focusing of thought about the place are assumed to be those rare experiences associated with

the artwork encounter - a musical experience. These are improbable experiences for one actually there in the normal course of life. So in one respect, it is about re-experiencing the place in purely sonic terms which affect a shift in mental image, by intermingling the immediacy of the *action* of suburban life with a state of contemplation - an uncommon contemplation on the subject itself. A reverie on which one does not ordinarily spend much time, simply because it is there and dominated by the images and expressions of function. But it may also be a contemplation on the composer's musical interpretation of collective experiences, assuming he has been there more than once. The listener is experiencing the composer's experiences and emotional responses through the composed in music.

This vicarious experience engenders conflict. To merely hear this work as a melding of composed material and natural sound would be to neutralise the sociological experience of the shopping mall. It is probably impossible for anyone to listen to this and remain oblivious to their experiences of shopping. However one feels about shopping malls, they are part of everyday life. But are they a part of everyday music?

What has always appeared to be a significant problem for compositions of tape and instruments is the credibility of the combination in performance. Such questions as 'In what sense is there a musical relation between the components?' seem to surface during a performance, especially when the recorded sounds share common traits with the instrumental material. If the success of a work depends on a unified experience, then the persistent awareness of two activities would constitute a failure, either on the part of the composer or in performance realisation. The pursuit of an aesthetic result through the confluence of such musical material challenges the composer, the performers and the technology.

In Steve MacKey's **Never Sing Before Breakfast** for Wind Quintet and taped domestic conversation, the approach appears contradictory to accepted practice for this form of composition, yet is effective precisely because of this. The tape material is not only not essentially musical with respect to the instrumental part but is itself presented as an imperfect recording. Playback is also cued by a performer rather than a technician in the wings, which certainly eliminates one source of confusion while focusing every aspect of the performance on the performers. The recording quality, or lack thereof, enhances the credibility of the subjects and conveys, to those with some recording experience, the spontaneity of the moment and occasion to which the material refers. For there is a sense of a genuine engagement in the tape part precisely because it appears sincere, untechnical and spontaneous. It is assumed that for the presentation of this work the listener would be given some insight into the origin and background of the material. But the playback quality also indicates that we should not be so concerned with what is being said or where, but more once again in the experience of a sense of *place* and the expression of lively human discourse.

The tape and instrumental parts integrate in the manner of contrary states. This counterpoint of *place* exists between that of the *domestic* and the *instrumental performance* worlds. But a continuous two part texture does not exist from the start. The listener is primed for the recorded sounds by an engaging introductory section into which a recording of a piano being played, slowly becomes recognisable (the tape begins with the composer working on the piece on a piano in his parents kitchen). This subtle point of entry results not through a fade-in but simply because it is so unobtrusive that it is not perceived immediately unless one is listening for it. When the more dramatic tape sounds enter, they seem to either puncture the moment or float on the underlying musical texture that has momentarily assumed a subordinate position. It is an uneasy but dramatic coexistence. The recorded material is in such contrast to the wind quintet, it often seems to break into the work with an effect similar to someone suddenly removing the roof above the performance space. The tape part is by no means easy listening. The listener strains to make sense of the obvious conversation and in the effort, is instead transported to another place. The fragments are short and relatively few in presentation but engage the imagination quickly. It becomes obvious that too much recorded material would destroy whatever effect is created in the juxtaposition of cultural moments.

As with **Quakerbridge**, there is the sensation of a musical transgression of the laws of place. The disturbing experience of hearing two places at once or of not quite hearing one or other place. This is similar to watching TV while people near you are carrying on a conversation in which you are less interested but unavoidably engaged. Or watching with the sound turned down. In this respect, the work has a powerful contemporaneous quality that mixes sensual familiarity with contextual dislocation, or at least it did when I last watched TV.

J.K.Randall's **Greek Nickel** Pieces for solo piano reflect yet another aspect of noise in the performance context, not as an exploration of or interaction with some form of prerecorded material but through the concurrency of the performance moment and room ambience. This is where this work radically differs from the majority of recorded solo piano works[9].

Where a recording is stipulated as *live* some concession is given, on the part of the listener, to the relation between the music and its performance context. The listener thus understands and is prepared to accept that the recording may contain aberrant sounds which will either contribute to or depreciate from an appreciation of the music beyond its inherent capacity. However, the fact that the recording explicitly contains such extended musical or non-musical material invariably lends a tantalising quality which has, predictably, been much sought after. Apart from the obvious sense of concert hall dimensions that may resonate the recording, what occasionally comes across in the sound is a sense of an energy that is partly the *silent* audience but more importantly the mediation of the place and performance moment by the performers. Yet in what sense *presence* is manifest, is subsumed in the pursuit of an appreciation of the music. It is somehow supplementary or incidental as an enhancing adjunct.

In the controlled studio mannerisms characteristic of the majority of recorded music, the presence of sound other than the designated music has been conventionally regarded as detrimental to the success of the recording and deplorable under the circumstances of a believed, favorable recording condition. It is usually vigorously pursued and expunged. Unless the recording seeks to emphasise the studio context, with such things as pre or post session dialogue or high jinks, recordings that incorporate *noise* of the performer in action, i.e. something that indicates the presence of a performer, are still regarded as a commercial novelty or session fault rather than essential to an understanding of the work. In most cases that is probably a correct evaluation of the situation.

The **Greek Nickel** Pieces are a private enveloping work in which the listener becomes acquainted with the performer and the musical place during the frequent moments of reflective ambience as much as through the music itself. Few recorded solo piano compositions come to mind with such space between the performance action. Each deliberated attack marking a surveyed point in a musical topos. One instinctively listens, or perhaps more engagingly, thinks between the music. The performance thus exists in some very different musical setting to those described above. There is also a strong sense of the performer, transfixed as a listener on every occasion, where the dying chords assume the proportional weight of the impending silence. The arrival at periods of real silence are as dramatic as the attack on the notes themselves. In these spacious moments there are only listeners. At some point in the interlude between each section, a respite occurs where roles are reaffirmed, as the pianist once again engages the instrument as performer.

Around the arched silences the performer is evident not only through the performance itself but in the occupancy of the role of performer. The sound of this occupancy is occasionally manifest in paper shuffling, creaking piano stool and piano pedals but dramatically felt in the holding of notes or the sensed deliberation and poise prevenient to the execution of those chords at the extremes of either the dynamic or keyboard range. The effect of the radically expatiated music is to chart a listening experience beyond the immediacy of the piano's pitches and idiom which operate as and allude to a logic of reference points, compelling yet predominantly unpredictable.

That **Quakerbridge**, **Never Sing Before Breakfast** and the **Greek Nickel** Pieces reflect differences in the accommodation of noise within the musical material is most likely of lesser interest when set against the totality of each work. In fact, how the *noise* factor contributes to each work requires thinking about the compositions in terms not well established within the field of composition itself. Consider the composition process that meticulously extracts material from a recording of noise (albeit, interesting to begin with), then formally places these sounds back against the source noise in the form of traditional musical material. Consider the conspicuousness of the recording media itself in replay against a common-practice musical setting where there are inevitably contrasts in the surfaces of the colliding sound worlds. Curiously, it is not necessarily the music or the prominent recorded material that is in contrast but the *noise* component (two in this case) of what sound engineers call the signal to noise ratio. Noise here is regarded as the "residual signal that is extraneous to the desired signal" (Dodge and Jerse 1985 29). Often, unfortunately, more of the former than the later. This is usually understood to be within such a system as a tape recorder or amplifier but it is important to recognise that it could also be the *system* of the space in which the recording takes place. In recording contexts other than sterile studios, such noise conditions can transfer the listener's attention between the recording and the listener's immediate space. Irrespective of the listener's reactions, it becomes a more complex setting for musical appreciation prior to the introduction of recording; one in which the total experience is altered and, perhaps, extended beyond either auditory concern. This has probably always occurred, to some extent, as part of the recorded music experience but been overlooked or conveniently ignored because it was not the point of that experience. It is generally accepted that one listens to the music, not the context one is hearing it in.

Fin de siècle conclusions

Throughout this paper there has been a conscious attempt to avoid any rigorous specification of what might constitute noise other than to circumnavigate concepts and views raised from one apparently rich source of noise in the world around us. This obviously encompasses a vast range of sonic experiences and provides a context, even if imaginary, for their existence. From the incidental sounds of daily activities to the diversity of speech inflections and conversation mannerisms, our hearing is constantly distracted in entirely new ways. But how this world sounds and how these sounds are interpreted is a different temporal matter. In the unexpectedness of their existence, in the range of their articulation and effect casual to the imperative, indifference to alarm - the study of noise is something that appears to happen as part of an assimilation into a place. The ringing of a bell, the shouting of someone on the street or the clattering slithery sound ice makes as it slides off slate roofs are geographically unique sounds, just a few of many that cause us to think about where we are. We often find that when someone from another culture speaks in our language, we have to wrestle our minds from the speaker's accent and manner of speaking onto the subject and its implications. The important part of the sensation of place is the realisation that it is around us all the time.

In the frenetic world in which most people live, the capacity to filter out a great deal of the generated noise of its activities becomes so acute and essential that rarely is there a chance to appreciate the extraordinary coincidences in the temporal/dynamic/timbral structure of that noise. Yet throughout life there are moments when we contribute to or expect there to be the appropriate noise: the home, the office, the sporting event and the concert hall. It is a confirmation of the nature of that collective action.

What does the concept of noise amount to in the current musical context? What is there to listen to or

think about in the fidelity captured in recordings? Noise means something different at this end of the century than it did at the other, or perhaps more speculatively, may have meant. With the decline of media noise we tolerate or perhaps require a substitute. The historical association of noise with the means to confront tradition and later, as the means to free music has given way to subtle investigations that often appear to evade the implications of these past associations. That noise cannot be explicitly music is predicated on historical and archetypal musical models. The social institutions that maintain the logic of this have dominated musical production but not the technology for reproduction. This has never been in the agenda of music and for a number of reasons could not be absorbed into the musical institutions. The institutions have provided access to the vault of musical ontology to the reproduction and processing technologies because of their supposed neutrality with respect to music and the nature of technology's status in the context of music's continued existence. Reproduction technology has been impossible to subjugate with purely musical criticism because of its ectopic criteria and powerful position. It simultaneously issues and manifests promises while leaving a developmental path strewn with limitations and failings. It has caused, indeed, it continues to cause music to forego its own momentum for the promise of a kind of immortality of moment - the quintessential recording.

Noise has always occupied that place between music and silence. It can necessitate a hermeneutic approach which in a simple instance, fills the conscious mind with some referential knowledge. It is about being somewhere and understanding or attempting to come to terms with that place. Thus noise as a source of musical material and compositional formality[10] is not simply a transition or inveigling into the cultural status quo of the concert hall by the street. It is a working out of the historical and social musical material with the present, a project in rethinking the function of music against a complex musical world that is dominated by reproduction in its most extreme form - the recording. Noise, in its most dramatic sense, is the perpetual collision of the past with the present.

Footnotes

1. Karl Kraus quote found in Adorno's *A Portrait of Walter Benjamin* in **Prisms** (see ref, below)
2. That is, bound to the dynamic of the marketplace as yet another commodity.
3. T. Bone Burnett quoted in Andrew Goodwin's **Sample & Hold: Pop Music in the Digital Age of Reproduction.**
4. "The whimsicalities of the unexpected melodies of the mechanical pianos and rattletrap orchestrinas of the Madrid streets and the little night taverns served as a theme for this piece, which I wrote expressly for the pianola..." Igor Stravinsky, 1936 **Chronicle of my Life** London Gollancz p.117
5. "new" references only a momentary but uniquely contemporary instance of society: the current one in a series of circumstances.
6. This is an encapsulated view and necessarily a simple one of a modernist perspective on music, in as much as it thinly connects the notion of "progress" in music with that concept in society and further intimates that society is in fact aware of this correlation. This is probably rather fanciful. Although society may still be under the influence of the modernist agenda, it does not necessarily follow that it appreciates or indeed recognises the constant culture/life parallelism other than in its most immediate forms. The current concept of modernism - certainly as it pertains to art - is avowedly too complex to support a simple perpetually progressive model of either art or society.
7. Shakespeare, **The Tragedy of Coriolanus** I.iv.22
8. I first heard this proposed by Paul Lansky.
9. The Nancarrow Player Piano Studies have the same ambient quality. On close listening, at the very beginning or during quiet periods, it is possible to hear the vacuum pump running and the paper passing from one roll to the other. Both the Randall and Nancarrow piano works were recorded in the composers' homes rather than the concert hall or recording studio.
10. That is, the natural order of presentation of material in a recording.

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Orality and jazz education

Bruce Johnson

This essay is part of a much larger project investigating the situation of a particular expressive form - jazz - in the larger culture. In spite of its pervasive influence on developments in twentieth century music, jazz has suffered trivialisation at the hands of its antagonists, and distortion by the romanticism of its supporters. This is because it has not developed and controlled a credible discourse of its own making; by 'discourse' I mean the way it is constructed rather than practised - how it is talked about, how it is taught, how it is commodified, marketed, distributed. In Melbourne currently there is a resurgence of interest in traditional jazz styles among young musicians, on a scale unique in Australia. The search for the reasons for this localised activity inevitably leads to speculation about how the lore and practice of jazz are transmitted, where and how young performers absorb the insights of jazz practice: how do they learn and how are they taught? The question of pedagogy holds particular interest in relation to jazz because of the music's indeterminate status in our society, an indeterminacy which manifests itself in the confused and often nervous discourse it inspires. This in turn is entangled with the larger question of how jazz is politicised by those discourses, how and why they work to disempower the music within a larger political economy - an issue to be taken up in another place[1].

For present purposes I am interested in what I am suggesting is the connection between the orality/aurality of jazz and the problem of finding an adequate pedagogic model for the music. The key to this discussion is that the music is essentially improvised. Immediately, however, this word proclaims a problematic, because in (jazz) practice it is not fully realisable. Even standard and definitive reference texts like the **Oxford Companion to Music** take the term for granted, giving a history of the practice but not a definition, as though there is no distance between the two. But it takes little pondering of the definition of 'improvisation' ("Made or said without previous preparation" -**Macquarie Dictionary**) to be reminded of what avant-gardists have often struggled with. Taken literally, the only human being who might be capable of true improvisation is the infant at birth. From that point on every action, sound, word, is more or less 'prepared'. If someone has any facility however rudimentary on an instrument, then preparation has taken place. If someone has spent ten minutes with an instrument and is then asked to improvise they will almost certainly start by doing something they have already done ('prepared') in that ten minutes. Even putting it to their lips or bringing fingers to strings or a keyboard is based on preparation. In **The Imperfect Art** Ted Gioia inadvertently backs into a relevant jazz truism that he fails to identify correctly, when he describes Paul Desmond as playing a "thinking man's jazz", exemplified in Desmond's quoting from a Charlie Parker blues in another song[2]. But quotation is more usually an alternative to improvisation in the unconsidered and unproblematic sense used by Gioia; it is a substitute for original thought, and a common tactic in performance. But above all, it is a reminder that 'improvisation' is almost always based on a prepared repertoire. The criticism that a musician plays too many clichés is usually the reverse of the truth, because what has really been noticed is that the repertoire of 'clichés', the stock, is too slender. The problem here is that strictly speaking the term 'improvisation' is inappropriate to the vast majority of jazz solos played from day to day; it is more useful (and certainly in this discussion) as a way of making a distinction between what goes on in jazz performance from performance based on textual notation. And if we relinquish the romantic fiction of improvisation in its lexical sense, I believe it releases us to locate a far more useful analogue in cultural practice.

I propose that we are more likely to recognise the sound of jazz in discussion of oral cultures and practices, i.e. where written notation is absent or marginal, than in the critical formulations of Modernism. Walter Ong's **Orality and Literacy**[3] frequently sounds as much like an account of contemporary jazz performance than of ancient Homeric practice. The process of 'oral memorisation' (pp. 57-68) presents suggestive analogies with jazz improvisation. The oral poet possessed a massive vocabulary of appropriate metrical phrases with which to solve technical problems as they presented themselves in performance; this is a more appropriate model of the jazz musician's repertoire of 'personal clichés' than the romanticised view presented by, for example Gioia. Although oral poets never sing a song the same way twice (p. 59) the process of their 'improvisation' is almost identical to that of the jazz musician in normal performance conditions: the 'rhapsodising' of the former is analogous to the musician's stitching an improvisation from an existing and growing internalised repertoire of phrases and devices. The description of the oral poet's assimilation of a structure is analogous to the way a musician assimilates new chord sequences: not a literal memorising so much as adapting the new 'subject' to the existing array. "... oral memory differs significantly from textual memory in ... a high somatic component" (p.67). This engagement of the body recalls the physicality of black jazz discourse: 'cooking', 'funky', and of course the sexual reference of the word 'jazz' itself. Miles Davis spoke of the famous Kind of Blue session, "I wanted a lot of spontaneity in the playing, just like I thought was in the interplay between those dancers and those

drummers and that finger playing piano playing with the Ballet Africaine"[4]. His analogy with interactive dancers recalls the insightful antipathy of many opponents of jazz, who saw how it bypassed the cerebral and activated the physical (another reason, incidentally, why the static conditions of the concert hall are inimical to jazz performance in a way more fluid sites are not).

Thus it is that resemblances to jazz performance practice appear most frequently not in discussion of text-based art forms, but in the oral performance traditions. Consider the following account of 'performance art' as "the moment of artistic creation and exploring the constraints on this - the dynamic relationship between star and audience, the effects of chance and accident, the shifting borders between music and noise"[4]; juxtapose this with the following by no means unrepresentative description of an early Australian jazz performance:

"[the instruments] include a frying pan and a saucepan. An operatic fantasy, played to a realistic accompaniment of thunder and lightning, with a few revolver shots thrown in, just to add to the general din. The act used to conclude with 'Oh! You drummer', a rag in which the band apparently went mad, playing with heads, arms, and bodies swaying to the music. The drummer concluded by throwing all his instruments up into the air. The pianist stood on his chair playing the frenzied melody, while the trombone and saxophone players fell over totally exhausted, gasping for breath."[6]

Jacques Attali's account of the jongleur and minstrel traditions[7] suggests provocative analogies with the history of jazz and its internal lines of demarcation. The description of the jongleur, in particular, surviving today in various forms including "simply an amateur who knew how to sing or play" (p.17) could almost be a description of the living and performing conditions of the majority of jazz musicians who play regularly; likewise his account of the Parisian cafe concerts is closer to the week to week actuality of jazz gigs than what is conventionally understood by he word 'concert'. Central to these resemblances is the fluid open-endedness of orality/aurality, the unpredictable moment of performance conditioned by mood, phyical disposition, weather (as Miles Davis put it[8]) and dynamic relation with an audience that is also part performer.

Inevitably this has repercussions for the way in which jazz lore and practice are transmitted; for what is called jazz studies. The distinctive character of jazz as a potential or actual presence in music academies has always been registered, and every Director of jazz diploma courses in Australia has stories to tell about resistance encountered. Overtly this is usually a manifestation of the high/low cultural configuration by which political leverage is maintained, but I believe that this is an oblique and misleading account of the fundamental point at issue. Furthermore, as long as jazz educators accede to these terms of debate, their programmes will remain mere colonial outposts of music education. The fulcrum on which the status of jazz studies turns is the orality/aurality of the subject in a text-centred culture. For all the fashionable intrusions of post-modernist and deconstructionist interrogation, Australian academies and their auxiliary structures remain the institutional expression of a text-dominated culture, and any activity conducted within them is forced more or less into that orientation. The text remains the privileged repository of knowledge and the vehicle of its transmission. The word 'privileged' is important. In a television and video era text is perhaps no longer the primary site of information, the one most often resorted to by most people. But it retains the privilege of legitimating information, essentially by propagating the high/low cultural binary. Text embodies the legitimating narratives, the cultural canon. The implementation of the legal or compulsory deposit system for libraries still proceeds as though the only significant record of our culture were textual. I am aware of post-graduate students working in the area of performance who are forbidden the use of film and television script, or even recorded interviews, on the grounds that these are inappropriate tools of research. Considerations of marketing, distribution, packaging, storage (commercial and domestic) effectively block the dissemination of anti-textual practices like performance poetry, whose projects often ironically aspire to conventional publication with self-defeating titles like **Off the Page**.

The text, medium of the dissecting eye, the distancing faculty, invades all expressive forms. In music it is the score which remains the definitive locus of Western art music. This is no anomaly if the score was the original storage system for the music, but what of oral forms, forms to which textual embodiment is not merely incidental but positively inimical? What happens to jazz when it triumphantly breaks through the walls of the conservatorium? There is no question that jazz educators to varying extents recognise the special importance of the ear, none more so than Victorian College of the Arts jazz studies director Brian Brown, whose axiom "The ear is the truest guide in the end" (taped interview, July 29 1991, Melbourne)[9] shows the kind of insight that one would expect from a man who has been a major and influential jazz performer since the fifties. But there are ramifications of the orality/aurality of jazz which are invisibly contested by the academic culture. The music academies, for example, all subscribe to an internationalist, professionalist educational objective. The explicit purpose of the training programmes is to equip young musicians to be competitive at the highest international level, and this has been allowed to flow into the jazz studies courses as though it was an objective compatible with the essential character of the music. The metropolitan point of reference is expressed at its most extreme form by recently appointed head of the Sydney jazz studies programme Dick Montz (interview, June 19 1991, Sydney). He is planning to introduce a bachelor's degree, the aim of which is to make students competitive on a world market. The training will include 'career management' and the economic conditions of the industry. But it will not include any investigation of the question of local stylistic identity. Such a question is a distraction, in his opinion, and the cultivation of a regional style will not enhance international competitiveness (so much, incidentally, for the shallow gloss of Australian academic post-modernism).

I suggest that there is a problem in transferring this educational philosophy wholesale from the areas traditionally covered by conservatorium studies. For one thing, it leads to a fixation upon pure performativity, on instrumental craft at its highest level of development - what is commonly recognised in the unfortunate phrase 'state of the art'. A teacher like Brown who has actually been immersed in the post-war history of jazz in Melbourne tries to ensure that students also gain some knowledge of earlier improvisational traditions and styles (op. cit.); likewise Maurie Le Doeuff in Adelaide (interview, 7 August 1991), and Pat Crichton in Perth (interview, 13 August 1991). But anecdotal evidence indicates that while they are not alone, they are in a minority among academic jazz educators, and in any case even they are constrained by the larger institutional culture which enshrines the aspiration to instrumental virtuosity at the highest contemporary level. It is dismaying to find this so taken for granted that any enquiry into its soundness as the dominant educational objective is regarded as against nature itself. But there are ideological icebergs here, and they collide violently and damagingly with jazz. Most obviously, the criterion of competitive professionalism marginalises the earlier styles of jazz. The conventions of collective improvisation developed in New Orleans early this century, for example, have become invested with an air of negligible primitivity, a formal ingenuousness which is irrelevant to Modernist sophistication and avant-garde experimentation. They are whimsical - even mildly embarrassing - insights left behind in the enlightening advance towards innovation and cultural completion. The bias of jazz studies courses reflects what has been called 'the tradition of the new'. It is a tradition which valorises ideas like 'experimental', 'innovation', 'avant-garde' as though they were historical absolutes. But these are relative terms which cannot be defined without reference to the 'grain' of the cultural matrix. Experimentation is not just a question of internal formal elaboration, but of the angle at which the activity strikes its culture. The teleology of artistic forms is a deeply misleading assumption concealed behind the professionalist implications of jazz studies objectives. In simple terms, innovation can also be retrieval. It is relevant to this that Attali proposes a "network of composition", as a herald of "a new kind of freedom", "new social relations" (p.20). He locates intimations of this, not surprisingly, in the iconoclasm of the Free Jazz movement; but also in the revival of what might be termed early and highly localised folk forms (op. cit. chp 5). Retrieval, revivalism, can itself be a revolutionary interrogation of contemporary practice. It seems to me that there is little or no recognition of these issues and possibilities in the institutionalised jazz studies courses, colonised as they are by a stale Enlightenment aesthetic. I have considered some of the practical, workface, implications of this for local jazz an article for **Journal of Australian Studies**[10].

In that same article I suggest that a valuable alternative is to be found outside the academies, and particularly in Melbourne. I am proposing that jazz pedagogy should break free of the analogy with notated music which subordinates it to European art music, that it should open itself up to practices which restore the absolute priority of the ear by the 'innovation of retrieval'. I shall point to a site where the application of this policy is producing musicians who are participating in and enriching their local culture, rather than being distanced from it by the mediations of internationalist professionalism. I am not implying that the importance of the ear is ignored in the academic environment, but that its priority is subliminally eroded by all the ramifications of the intrusions of a visual pedagogical field. The hierarchy that subordinates ear to eye should be abolished. Instead of centralising the score as the repository of music, the ear should be used as a medium for the most basic problem solving.

Currently in Melbourne there is an extraordinary pool of young jazz musicians who are generating a resurgence and rejuvenation of pre-bop jazz[11]. Their common provenance includes participation in the fortnightly workshops presented by the Victorian Jazz Club. The first thing that a professional jazz educator would be likely to think upon attending one of these is that there was no structure, no methodology, no clear objective in view, and the temptation would therefore be to trivialise them as negligibly ingenuous. But something has to be stressed here: there is no doubt that these workshops are helping to produce some of the most outstanding jazz practitioners since the sixties. The professional is likely then to sustain her/his condescension with the dismissive observation that what they are practising is an archaic - and therefore relatively primitive form of jazz - the style broadly referred to as traditional. In doing so he/she would simplistically accept two givens which I have been suggesting are inappropriate to jazz:

1. the teleology of expressive forms and,
2. the limiting conception of internationalist professionalism.

If we can continue to prise these open and release a little radical curiosity, it is possible that the question of what is so distinctive about the VJC workshops will be accorded the importance it deserves. There is in fact a structure operating, but it is not readily intelligible to a pedagogy centred on printed text as the repository of information. The structure is imposed by the instinctive recognition that jazz is primarily an oral/aural form. Ian Smith (taped interview, 26 July 1991, Melbourne), who most frequently steers the workshops (and who also plays gigs with their alumni), assigns such priority to the ear that he prefers to use no notation, including chord charts, at all. A song is nominated, and then it is played both collectively and with interspersed solos, and the only guide available is the student's ear. One of the most commanding reed players to appear on the pre-bop scene since the likes of Paul Furniss back in the early sixties is 20 year-old (at the time of this enquiry) Joe Stevenson. His account (taped interview, 29 July 1991, Melbourne) of what he got from the workshops corresponds with the those of all the students I have talked to. It is so deceptively simple that it is easy to overlook the decisiveness of the experience he is describing. He found that the workshops provided what he called a *play along* context, rather than following a structured regime; they developed the

attentiveness and problem-solving capacities of his ear, because of the absence of what might be termed 'the answers in the back of the book', ie, written music and chords. He had only his ear to help him negotiate his way through the tangle of up to twenty novices collectively improvising through the harmonic changes. Inevitably the results are frequently a sustained cacophony that a professional educator would find it difficult to permit without interrupting the process and spelling out the resolutions. But what is happening under that cacophony is a radical exploration of possiblities (many of them turning out to be blind alleys) using a map that is exclusively aural. Stevenson found the experience invaluable in the development of an ear for polyphony, as an opportunity to try things out for himself. And his account is representative.

This complete auralising of the teaching process characterises the work of other important teachers working outside the major institutions. Researcher into Australian jazz and other improvisational musics, John Whiteoak describes the teaching of trombonist Bill Howard in the same terms (interview 4 August 1991, Melbourne). One of the most important young emergent musicians is Steven Grant, who chose to learn, then teach his school friends (including Joe Stevenson), by a laborious aural exploration of the music. He does not think of jazz as visual, reposing in a finished text, but as a process conducted by the mind, relying on the ear (taped interview 30 July 1991, Melbourne). The most influential figure in the perpetuation of this oral/aural tradition, however, is Ade Monsbourgh (mentor at various times to Bill Howard and Ian Smith among many others, going back to the thirties). Some account of his importance is provided in the Journal of Australian Studies article written in connection with this essay, and in the references to him in **The Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz**[12]. It is as an oral pedagogue, in fact that he originally attracted the (often misleading) appellation 'Father of Australian jazz'. His own thoughts on the transmission of lore and practice are invaluable to this discussion. They are taken from an interview taped on 30 July 1991 in Melbourne. One of the most interesting themes that ran throughout his reflections was his own sense of being ambiguously and therefore in some obscure way illegitimately situated in relation to the dominant culture and its jazz pedagogy and practice:

"I've been trying to draw comparisons and sort of make excuses for myself for still being interested in Potato Head Blues or something when I should be thinking about playing as many notes as I can in three seconds."

Here is the Scarlet Letter of naive antiquarianism imposed by the tradition of the new, but worn, I suggest with the same equivocation as Hester Prynne's, for Monsbourgh went on to say that he doesn't really believe that he should be playing as many notes as he can, he simply feels that he should believe it. When asked what he regards as the essential character of jazz, two things in particular emerged:

1. Polyphonic improvisation: the three horn collective improvisation distinctive above all to what is loosely called traditional jazz (and most fully realized in early New Orleans) which generates unpredictable successions of polyphonic tension and release of a kind that virtually disappeared with the parallel and unison lines of swing and bop. Interestingly, Monsbourgh anathematised the idea of predictability with reference to textuality: "It sounds written down". His feeling is that a failure to address collective improvisation is to miss the essential nature of jazz.

2. Orality/aurality is therefore decisive. It is useful to hear his own description of his earliest attempts to learn and to teach jazz; the following is a combination of summary and verbatim transcription of part of the interview.

Recalling his earliest years as a practitioner of the music in the thirties, he knew no-one who read music (this must therefore predate his association with Graeme Bell, who began with conventional training, which, like Monsbourgh - see below - he found an impediment to grasping jazz practice). Originally he and his colleagues didn't even refer to chord charts, though gradually they came to use them. Monsbourgh first started on piano, learning in the conventional way that placed a score at the centre of the process. Then, mainly through radio, he became interested in jazz -

"I could see that this music [the formal lessons] wasn't getting me anywhere at all."

He stopped the lessons.

"Right from that moment I started to get somewhere, because then I went to the piano on my own and started to listen to records. ... I had to sort of think about it and learn [for] myself - because there was no teacher around at that stage. I gradually got to the stage where I had a faint idea of what I was doing"

This of course is not an unfamiliar agon in jazz mythology. But the next stage has less often been enquired into - how the self taught student became the teacher. I wanted to know the form in which Monsbourgh transmitted what he had learned to others so that they could actually play as a group. Did he write out chord sequences? Not in the first instance:

"I had to work out my own idea of how to get [for example] a seventh chord. It was a very painstaking business. ... I didn't know what it was called at all. That came a few years later".

Me: "OK, so you know that if I press these notes on the piano a certain chord emerges which is the one I want there. How would you explain what that chord was to someone else?"

Monsbourgh: "Ah - I used to call them 1,3,5 - that's a major chord ... I'd show them that there were two main chords connected to that one. I'd show them how you form that. See, you've got F, you've got C7, and you've got B flat. That's what I'd start off by teaching them. Then I'd show them a few tunes ... which could be played with those 3 chords, and add a few more eventually."

Me: "And at that time you didn't have a name for the chords?"

Monsbourgh: "No I didn't actually. I don't know when that started."

The similarities between this account, Steven Grant's account of how he taught himself nearly fifty years later, and Joe Stevenson's account of how Grant in turn taught him, are striking. And what

produces those resemblances is a decisively and indeed almost exclusively oral/aural approach to the music. The process was, as Monsbourgh recalls, painstakingly slow, and conducted without the benefit of an established symbolic discourse. He was fully aware that today students are able to traverse the theory behind what he was learning in weeks. But more by visual exploration of text-stored information, than by aural exploration of information that is being stored in the mind only. He spoke of the initial Eurocentric teaching that almost all young children received then and now: the music "went from the eye of the player to the ear of the listener without passing through the mind of anybody - what happened, why it happened. That's how it was done". A simplification, but with a compelling acuteness. His earliest attempts to play and teach were conducted without benefit of a discursive structure; that is, he simply didn't know what to call the groups of sounds he was hearing, though he knew what they sounded like. His ear led, while he groped for signs (visual, verbal) that would mediate them.

The practices I have been describing outside of the academies are distinguished by the absolute centrality of the aural, the instinctive belief that jazz is in essence an oral form. Gradually notation enters the picture in an auxiliary capacity, but rarely in a form more prescriptive than chord sequences. And even with a set of chords as a crutch, collective improvisation has to remain crucially a matter of listening rather than reading (or even remembering a text); to this extent, collective improvisation expresses the orality of jazz more than any other component of its execution. In the act of collective improvisation it is necessary continuously to be making split second decisions wholly on the basis of what is being heard at any moment from (in the classic format) two other horns, not to mention the interweavings of a the units in the rhythm section. Even playing over a basic triad with its underlying scale in mind, the ear has to be ready to evaluate at any instant the sounds of two other horns seeking purchase on the chord, complicated of course by deformations such as flattened thirds, fifths, and later ninths, tenths and so on, and of course the further complications of minor chords. However complex the substitutions of bop, the absence of collective improvisation as a defining characteristic leads to some marginalisation of this aural processing. There are points at which it enters the performance, particularly in the interraction between horn soloist and the pianist's substitutions (particularly on turnarounds), and in final cadences where, say, a flattened fifth has to be relinquished as the ear picks up a perfect fifth from another player. But in the New Orleans tradition this alertness is of a different order, and almost the defining skill (which is not to say that all putative exponents of the style possess it). And it is first and foremost an aural rather than a visual skill. In a print/eye based episteme, it is a skill that is likely to be rendered negligible. Given how 'primitive' the pedagogic implications sound, it is worth repeating that by this means, one of Australia's most distinctive, durable, and internationally influential jazz cultures has been brought into being and nurtured.

What kind of practical suggestions arise for jazz education in Australia? First, to reopen the debate about the nature of the subject and the objectives of teaching it. I believe that the way it is located in the administrative structure urgently needs review: jazz should not be situated as a satellite of traditional Music Departments. The fact that it has sonority in common leads to a misalliance; it is the epistemological difference that is decisive, and one way to recognise this is to separate jazz studies from the conventional Eurocentric programmes, so that it would have the same administrative and philosophical autonomy as, say a Department of History (and of course entitled to develop its own inter-disciplinary links). Greater attention to the local history and practice of the music is vital, since jazz has always been most fertile as a local music disseminated orally. The more open to the actual extramural workface the better also, as the orality of the music presupposes interaction with a non-specialist, non-professional community, in the manner of the Sacrificial Network proposed by Attali[13]. Evidence of the productivity of this remains vivid in the memory of the connection between The Basement in Sydney and the NSW Conservatorium programme under Howie Smith during the seventies. The academies would also profit by becoming more responsive to the non-academic teaching sites and practices I have reviewed in the foregoing. Finally, it seems time for the jazz studies courses (and I would say all academic music courses) to redefine their objectives in the light of arguable differences between training and education, and the importance to the spirit of undirected play as a process rather than directed to a product. The lore and practice of jazz are most richly stored not in texts, but in the minds of its practitioners and transmitted in practice, by the medium of the ear. No jazz statement is ever completed in the way implied by notation. It cannot be definitively stored in a static condition, as on a score or even on a record. Ideally the lore is constantly being processed in the mind of the practitioner, and this is not so effectively carried out if the student comes to think of her/his repertoire waiting in **The Real Book** to be looked at on the night. Bob Barnard has said that he rarely practises in the usual sense, but he thinks a lot about form. Training is the inculcation of a marketable skill, of how to do something for money, or some equivalent not inherently connected with the skill. Training rarely asks whether the activity is in itself worth doing. Its usual medium is the eye - the manual, the instruction kit, the textbook. It is destination (product) oriented, and the skill which is the product is simply a means to an end: successful participation in the existing political economy. It generally follows a prearranged programme to which not all students are necessarily tractable - they drop out, assuming a stigma as they do so. On the other hand, education includes the elaboration of what something is and why we might be spiritually enriched by doing it. Historically its most inspirational medium is the spoken word. The most influential teachers worked most effectively through the ear. Education is process-oriented - the journey is more important than the destination, and time must be taken, not overcome. Education is open-ended; it does not close or complete, and the destination is

(continued on page 46)

Music in therapy
incorporating case studies in gerontology

Marie Sorensen

Music is a form of sensory stimulation - a multisensory experience. Music consists of sounds which can be felt, heard, seen, moved to, and it exists in time. Music has an emotive quality which provides each individual the opportunity to express themselves as a unique person. A music therapist has an entire range of options available with which to achieve a desired response when working with individuals. The achievements of music therapy can thus best be illustrated through actual case studies.

The planned strategies for a music therapy programme are as follows:

1. Define the problem or area of need, (assessment)
2. Establish a goal
3. Plan and prepare appropriate music activities
4. Implement procedures
5. Evaluate response

It must be noted that the role of the music therapist is not that of a music educator. Therapy is not intended to teach a group a particular skill and expect the cause and effect to elicit the same response. A different aim may be achieved with every individual a music therapist works with. Within this realm, music provides for self-expression and behaviour as a reflection of self expressive needs.

In an *Early Intervention Programme* (0 - 4 years generally) the aims for young children will be:

1. Physical stimulation - to maintain or improve physical state
2. Mental stimulation - to increase mental capacity as much as possible through imitation learning and creative exercises
3. Social stimulation - to provide a place of social freedom and equality as opposed to a culture which would ostracise handicapped people.
4. Relaxation - to provide a medium through which to learn how to relax.

When working with a group of physically disabled people e.g. stroke patients, accident victims and deaf and blind patients the physical state is primarily dealt with and this may also include sessions on relaxation (using music as the medium). Social confidence may also need to be part of the programme due to a general unwillingness to accept physically handicapped people into the general community.

Psychiatric patients need to develop trust before they will be counselled, and music plays a beneficial role here as the medium through which a patient can move to deflect problems onto something concrete e.g. the lyrics in a particular song.

Within the realm of Gerontology (the science of managing the elderly) the physical assessment will vary dramatically with each patient. Mentally, most geriatrics suffer a loss of prestige in status. Therefore the music therapist must play a different role with each patient.

The goals to be established are generally individual goals, however, when working with groups the therapist must be aware that despite any therapeutic aim, the non-conforming patient must not be made to feel ill at ease or guilty. After assessment, goals are established and defined as physical, mental and/or social goals. Music activities may include exercises to music, relaxation to music and socialising using music as a 'trigger point'. The music may be taped and/or live, providing tactile, visual, verbal and kinesthetic stimulation. Percussion instruments are also a valuable aid with many patients through improvisation. The instruments are easy to hold (even little bells can easily be slipped over arthritic fingers) or instruments are easy to tap. Feelings of anger may be dispelled using this technique - a good bashing is given to an instrument instead of verbal abuse to a nurse or other patient! Percussion instruments can also act as a diversion of self-expression. That is, instead of singing or speaking and possibly feeling inadequate, the focus is moved from the patient to the instrument. The other distinct advantage is that a non-musician can play the instruments and still not feel inadequate.

Before the introduction of television music was a very large part of most people's lives, so music can become a prime tool when working with the elderly. Geriatric care is often concerned with simply maintaining a particular state of health in a patient rather than improving it. The best possible achievement is aimed for and a constant level state of health may just be the best that is attainable. Evaluation must be done objectively, however, a successful session may not have achieved the set goals but provided a rewarding experience in a related way.

Note that assessment in the following case studies is determined by the music therapist's ability to perceive objectively any improvements or deteriorations in collaboration with a music therapy assistant and consultation with nursing staff.

Case 1

A geriatric gentleman (resident of a nursing home) with both legs amputated, very frail, wheelchair bound, very withdrawn, lack of self esteem, inability to socialise on a small or large scale. Goals for this patient were to increase or maintain his physical capacity, increase his self-esteem and to widen his

social circle so that he would at least participate in general activities. Sessional work included exercises to music (using various aids such as scarves and balloons) 'old-time' singing (to encourage verbalisation) and games such as music bingo to bring him into a social circle and feel accepted within the nursing home community.

Results

The results week after week were not encouraging. The gentleman had for thirteen weeks refused to participate in any activities, but would at least be present in the room for the entire session which ran weekly. A breakthrough was achieved in an unexpected manner. During the Christmas week, Christmas activities were presented, Christmas songs were sung and the music therapist gave out small edible gifts as a warm gesture. After this session the patient participated in every activity offered to him by the therapist in every succeeding week. After twenty-one months, the patient had maintained his physical capacity (not improved, but not deteriorated) his self-esteem appeared to be 75-80% improved while the music therapist was present and his social skills were much improved due to his willingness to participate in all activities each week.

Case 2

A geriatric gentleman quite frail, unable to walk, with Parkinson's Disease (a disease of the nervous system), quite shy but with a genuine desire to socialise a little for company. Goals for this patient were to attempt to maintain his physical capacity, draw out his personality in order to widen his social involvement and to provide comfort and friendship through both music and a genuine friendship with the therapist. Sessional work included gentle exercises to music, a lot of 'old-time' singing and listening to and talking about old records to encourage verbalisation and consequent self-esteem.

Results

Physical improvement was not possible here, as the patient inevitably deteriorated, however, the exercises and movement may well have kept him more able for a longer period of time. (Similar cases have determined that a patient receiving some physical therapy will not deteriorate at the same speed as a patient not receiving any physical treatment.) Self-esteem and a willingness to participate in many other activities with other patients was much improved after one particular session approximately twenty-one weeks into the programme. After listening to some old records, the therapist attempted to draw out conversation by pursuing the line of his family, in particular the illness and subsequent death of his son. After this session, the patient was always willing to participate in any proposed activity - physical or social. His self-esteem rose markedly and this also cheered the patients surrounding him.

Case 3

A blind lady, able to walk with some assistance, feels quite inadequate due to her physical shortcoming. Goals for this lady were to maintain or improve her physical competence and to improve her self-esteem as much as possible. Sessional work for this patient included exercises to music, relaxation to music, improvisation with percussion instruments and singing and music bingo to encourage verbalisation, social skills and self-esteem.

Results

Physically, this patient remained on an even level, not improving but not deteriorating. Music appeared to have opened up an entire new world for this patient. She sang loudly every session, was very pleasant and co-operative with nursing staff and sociable with other patients where previously, failing eyesight had closed many doors, music opened up a new realm.

Case 4

An elderly lady, ex-schoolteacher, handicapped as the result of a stroke, left with no use of her left side arm and leg. Goals for this patient were to maintain, improve if possible, her given physical state and to make her more sociable to other patients by toning down her strong bullying personality and making her conform a little to the routine within the nursing home in order to make her a little easier to manage. All this must be done with no loss to self-esteem - a delicate task. Sessional work involved exercises to music, relaxation to music (very important in this case), listening to and discussing 'old-time' songs, and the relevance in the patient's life.

Results

Physically the patient slowly but surely deteriorated, this process hurried along by a fall. Socially she is quite difficult at times to nurses and can be quite rude to other patients. However, during a music therapy session, she attempted to rise to the occasion and undertook physical activities approximately 40% of the time, and socialised and verbalised her past experiences 100% of the time during 'play and talk' sessions.

A particular emphasis was placed on using music as the way through to discussion of the patient's children when they were young - talk which always softened this patient's outlook on all matters, including staff, other patients and importantly - herself.

The above case studies in Gerontology and their results are a direct reflection of E. Thayer Gaston's principles which are a primary source of direction for the use of music by a therapist:

1. The establishment or re-establishment of interpersonal relationships.
2. The bringing about of self-esteem through self-actualisation
3. The utilisation of the unique potential of rhythm to energise and bring order.

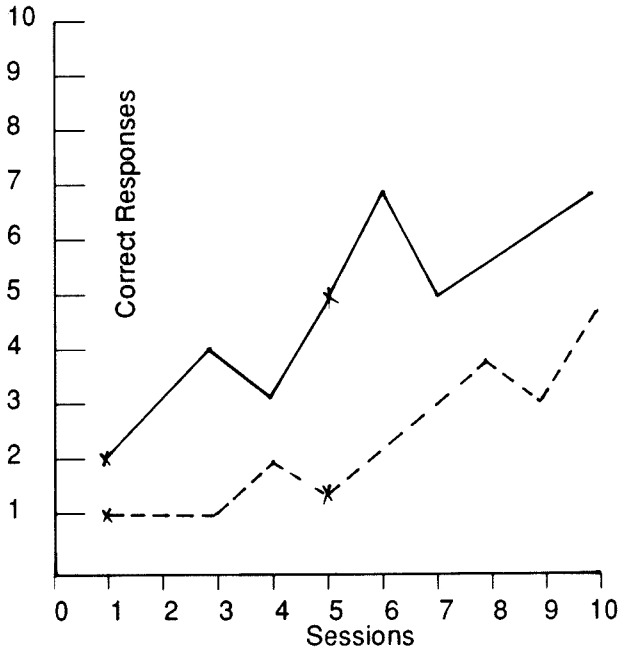
During behaviour modification sessions, charts are sometimes used to assess the consequence of the therapeutic plan (example 1). Diagrams would be accompanied by a report on the case including an antecedent - behaviour report, occurrence - session work, consequence - result of session, and further comments.

Further to the advantages of music in the use of therapy is the theory that music will integrate the workings of the *ego*, *super-ego* and *id* from Freud's conceptual model of the psyche. The Id's orientation towards pleasure can be satisfied by the free expression in sound of emotions. The Ego's reality principle is satisfied as an ordered physical form as given to

those impulses experienced. The Super-Ego's orientation towards morals is satisfied, as making music in this therapeutic way is a socially acceptable activity. As music exists in time, a listener/performer (patient) will experience many emotions and psyche functions.

In a more practical realm, music in the form of therapy will take the emphasis off the patient and into the outcome, an outcome which may often delight and satisfy the patient. Music integrated within a warm relationship with the therapist may not only achieve all theoretical goals but may provide new life in unexpected ways.

Functional Analysis Form
treatment



key:
—— follow prescribed exercise movements.
------ sit down in the chair.
X reliability check

Example 1

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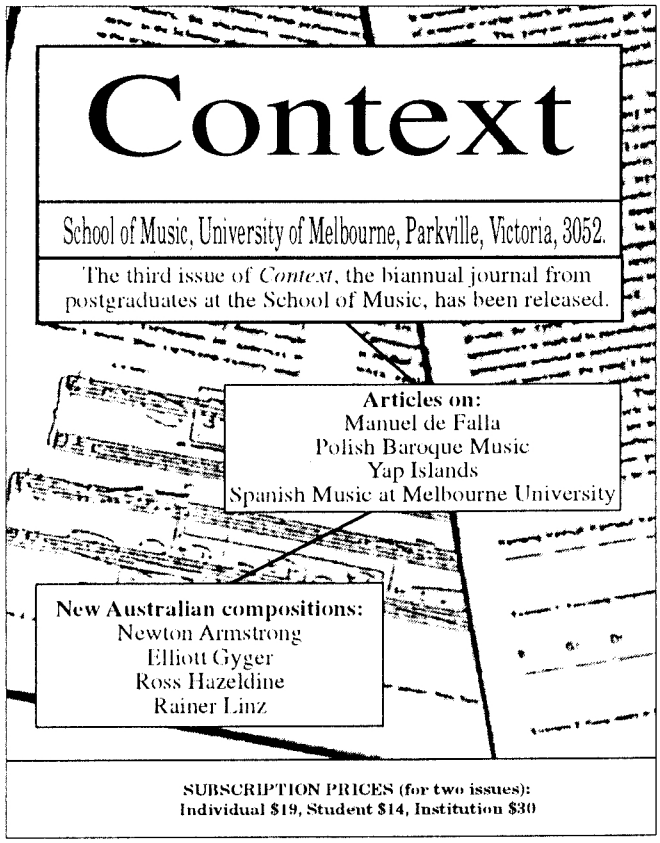
(continued from page 43)
no more premeditated than the next step. It discovers as it goes, through improvisation. Its emphasis is on vocationalism rather than professionalism. It is worth thinking again about professionalism as the central objective for a course in something so much more potentially enriching as the practice of music.

Footnotes
(All editions listed are those referred to in this text, though not necessarily the first published.)
1. See for example Bruce Johnson, *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya: problems of Jazz discourse*, to be published in **Popular Music**, Vol. 12 No. 1
2. Ted Gioia, **The Imperfect Art: Reflections on Jazz and Modern Culture** (OUP, 1988) p. 86
3. Walter J. Ong, **Orality and Literacy: the technologizing of the Word** (Methuen, 1982).
4. Miles Davis with Quincy Troupe, **Miles: The Autobiography** (Picador, 1990) p. 224
5. Simon Frith and Howard Horne, **Art into Pop** (Routledge, 1989) p. 101.
6. Recollected and quoted in **Australian Music Maker and Dance Band News**, December 1936.
7. Jacques Attali, **Noise: The Political Economy of Music**, Vol 16 in Theory and History of Literature, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 15 ff.
8. Op. Cit. p. 290. Davis persistently asserts the decisive orality/aurality of jazz, as for example pp.79, 213, 224.
9. All interviews referred to were conducted by me.
10. Bruce Johnson, "The Great Divide: Australian traditional jazz and the academies", to be published in **Journal of Australian Studies** 35, 1992.
11. Ibid.
12. Bruce Johnson, **The Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz** (OUP, 1987)
13. Attali Op. cit., especially chapter 2.



What's the Matter with Today's Experimental Music?

Organised sound too rarely heard.
By Leigh Landy
Contemporary Music Studies vol 4, ed Nigel Osborne
Harwood Academic Publishers, Private Bag 8 Camberwell Vic 3124, 1991

This recently-published study of experimental music created over the last forty years presents material that would appeal to many a musician or music-lover interested in experimental music's current state, and possible future. Landy's main approach is with the aesthetics of experimental music, as he challenges the intentions and practices of well-known experimentalists of the '50s, '60s and '70s and those breaking into the public eye today. With almost abrupt conciseness Landy covers many concerns, from painstaking definitions of terms and techniques, to philosophies behind creative inspiration, to the increasing significance of the media, to how music currently relates to community and locality.

In coming to a clear definition of the term "experimental", however, the introduction is largely dedicated towards comparing uses and understandings of the word as seen by various eras and composers. Landy bases his understanding of the term, and indeed his book, on "...experimental music is music in which the innovative component (not in the sense of newness found in any artistic work, but instead substantial innovation as clearly intended by the composer) of any aspect of a given piece takes priority above the more general technical craftsmanship expected of any art work."

It is clear that this definition is of great significance in Landy's work, and no surprise then that the philosophies of John Cage are predominant in the earlier sections of the study.

Further definitions, this time on the question of compositional technique, give a clear indication of how the traditional parameters of music have been broadened over the last forty years and how they will continue to evolve, or at least have the 'potential' to be evolving still. This quasi update of developments is obviously not an in-depth analysis of composing procedures but does serve as a reference point for the issues raised subsequently. Here, as with certain other sections of the book, Landy refers to the techniques and styles of composers of yesterday (today!) such as Xenakis, Ligeti, Stockhausen and Cage, which can confuse the topic of 'today's' music, it already being an elusive question.

Among the most interesting and valuable points raised in this book are those concerning music in the community, music combined with other art forms, music in education and music and politics. Landy has a way of posing extremely thought provoking questions that encourage us to reassess the current systems by which we operate. With the amount of control the media (radio, critics, advertising etc) has over musicians and their potential audience, he wonders whether we shouldn't become more active in taking music to our communities, also creating music for specific localities rather than succumbing to the pressures of competitive commercialism. We should also ensure that students from early ages are encouraged to create their own music and their own instruments, thereby becoming involved in the realm of inspiration behind sound, as opposed to only studying the conventional methods of instrumental playing.

The issue of technology is dealt with fairly gingerly. A good overall view of computer music and its techniques is given, although here the author falls a long way short of giving evidence for his conclusions. As with certain other topics, Landy's viewpoints are often not closely enough supported with musical examples and case studies. Fortunately however, Landy's intuition is sharp and the research he does present is thoughtful and concise. One interesting point raised is that computer music is so accessible to so many people today that it can and is being used to create 'neo' versions of already familiar genres. He blames this on the advent of MIDI to a certain extent with its tendency towards confining a composer to pitch (especially those of us who are not so inventive!), whereas originally, work with music computers and synthesisers was pioneered by diehard experimentalists seeking unique sonorities. Interestingly, Landy places most hope in the minority of composers who are genuinely looking for new sounds in technology, whether in combination with acoustic instruments, through improvisation, mixed artforms or alone.

If not immediately apparent in the title, Landy is actually quite positive about the prospects of a happy future for experimental music. The many negative aspects of its current state are brought to light as warning signals against the unsavoury prospect of them consuming the positive ones. Landy's views throw a supportive blanket over the winter chill. Now is NOT the time to despair.

Amelia Barden

17 Tones

A collection of compositions in 17 tone tempered tuning with recordings on enclosed cassette. Edited by Georg Hajdu. Texts in German and English. Thürmchen Verlag Th 62, Cologne 1992.

This collection of scores with cassette is a record of a very interesting project. Cologne-based composer Georg Hajdu (now living in Berkeley, California), inspired by work on microtonal music in the seminars of Johannes Fritsch and Clarence Barlow, asked a number of friends to compose work in 17-tone equal temperament, able to be performed on a set of two pianos tuned in that way (white keys the same on both pianos, black keys different). Five composers responded to his request, producing works with a variety of orchestrations. (In fact, Hajdu's work is the only piece notated for two pianos, and on the tape his work is very colourfully realised by computer controlled samplers!) The five composers are Carola Bauckholt, Clarence Barlow, Georg Hajdu, Australian Caroline Wilkins (annoyingly misspelt Wilkens throughout the volume except in her signature on the score) and Caspar Johannes Walter. Each piece is attractive in its own way, and each explores different aspects of 17-tone tuning.

Bauckholt's piece **scala mobile**, realised on what sounds like a Yamaha FM synthesiser, is spare and slow. Four lines, using four small different divisions of the scale, so that we hear different kinds of 'chromatic' scales available in the tuning, are played at four slightly varying tempi. They combine in their clockwork way, make their statement, and disappear. I wasn't surprised to read that the piece was a tribute to Conlon Nancarrow.

Wilkins' **Piece for 17 Tones** is likewise slow, spare, polyrhythmic, and realised with FM timbres. In her case however, toward the middle of the 3 1/2 minute piece things accelerate, then get slower. Long notes overlap slightly, allowing us to briefly savour the quality of the

intervals in this scale. These brief moments of harmony are offset by occasional short notes of contrasting timbre in different ranges.

In **OTOdeBLU**, Clarence Barlow uses only 10 of the 17 tones, assembling them into three quasi-just intonation blues scales. The piece is realised on what sounds like a computer-controlled piano. This piece also shows Nancarrow's influence, with its distorted blues licks and its maniacal semiquaver runs traversing the lines of the piece. Composed using Clarence's Autobusk composing program, it's a very funny piece.

Hajdu's own **Heptadecatonic Drops** is the most classically-conceived of the pieces. He uses three kinds of melodic material in the piece, fragmenting them and alternating them until they achieve a kind of apotheosis at the end. One of these is a lovely series of juxtaposed chains of fifths. Another has a propulsive series of repeated notes, here played with a pop tom tom sample. The piece is the longest of the set, and concludes with a clockwork combining of all the materials into a texture reminiscent of the Bauckholt or Wilkins works.

Walter's **langer Samstag** is perhaps the most curious of the set. It is scored for three pianos, two in 17-tone and one in 12-tone, and is here recorded by what sounds like three people at three pianos. He starts with a jaunty blues-inflected texture similar to the Barlow piece, but quickly, by the fifth bar, breaks down this texture with the intrusion of a series of repeated B-flats on the 12-tone piano. For the rest of the piece, the B-flats keep coming back again and again, dominating the material on the 17-tone pianos which only sporadically and briefly re-emerge, making what seem to be intonational 'blurrings' over the almost Beethovenian reiterated figures.

I mentioned Conlon Nancarrow earlier in this review, and all the works in this set share another similarity with his. That is, valuable as these scores may be for study purposes, for all practical purposes the works exist in finished form as sound on tape. As with Nancarrow's work the scores, even where they precede realisation, seem like after-the-fact visual leftovers. But again, as in Nancarrow's case, the existence of the scores may prompt one or two other folks to make their own realisations of the works, and may even help to reconstruct the works if and when the sound recordings are lost. In addition, the scores form a most valuable tool for studying how the tuning was used. It seems to me that as much of the pleasure of microtonal music today lies in studying how these tunings can be used, as in hearing the works or playing them (refer to any issue of **1/1** or **Xenharmonikon** for proof of this). Finally, the scores also provide another object, representing the work, which can be circulated to remind people of the works' existence, and enabling people to deal with it in other than purely aural terms.

So I would recommend this project highly. The tape is extremely pleasant listening. I like each piece very much. (Although I am curious about the very clear gender-division in the album. Both women produce very slow, abstract, clockwork-like pieces while the three men produce busy, fragmented pieces which have references to other music in them!) And the scores are very valuable in that they show how each composer has used the tuning, and inspire ideas of other ways to use it. In short, for those interested in microtonal music, this volume would be most valuable.

Warren Burt

Leonardo Music Journal

Volume 1 no. 1 with companion CD. Guest editor Larry Polansky. Pergammon Press NY 1991

This new initiative from the well-established journal *Leonardo* will be seen as a welcome development by musicians and artists the world over. Similar in style and format to its parent publication, the Leonardo Music Journal's first issue contains a collection of perspectives on experimental music (including an overview of Australian experimental music 1963-90 by Warren Burt), essays by artists incl. John Bischoff, Sara Garden Armstrong, Daniel Goode and Peter Beyls on aspects of their own work, and theoretical articles by Charles Ames and Martin Bartlett. The accompanying CD includes work by two Australians, Graeme Gerrard and Sarah Hopkins, whose work will be well-known locally. With an aim of eroding the artifical boundaries between the visual and sonic arts, this publication is well worth following up by everyone interested in the relationship between the sound arts and science and technology.

Contemporary Music Review

Editor in Chief Nigel Osborne. Harwood Academic Publishers ISSN 0749 4467

Volume 6 Part 1 Live Electronics (with accompanying cassette) ed. Peter Nelson & Stephen Montague 1991

Volume 6 Part 2 New Tonality ed. Paul Moravec 1992

CMR, a journal with an international musical outlook, has adopted a theme-based editorial approach to content. It seeks, according to US regional editor Fred Lerdahl, to encourage diversity and provide a forum for an intelligent and sympathetic dialogue on matters of general concern to modern music. Judging by the two issues at hand, it certainly is to be applauded -and supported- in its achievement.

While a number of treatises on Live Electronic Music are available in print, there is much new material in the Live Electronics issue. It contains a section on new performance instruments including articles on instrument design work at STEIM studios in Amsterdam, Xenakis' UPIC as a performing instrument, and interactive musical environments. The second section, Live Electronics, contains material of a more general nature and includes overviews of work in America, Britain, New Zealand, Australia (thanks once again to Warren Burt), Denmark, France and Germany. The accompanying cassette contains 24 short (mainly excerpt) tracks intended to provide a sonic illustration of the work covered in the issue.

The New Tonality issue, somewhat thinner, contains a number of articles that might be described as more esoteric in style. This could be due to a generally-held view that 'The New Tonality' is part of some post-modernist ideal, but in any case it makes for interesting and diverse reading. The issue contains articles by George Rochberg, Lou Harrison, Paul Moravec, John A Lennon and Stephen Jaffe. Forthcoming issues are planned on topics ranging from microcomputers, modernism and materials, choral techniques and opera to music and religion, time, and Soviet electronic music. An issue on Australian music is also planned for the future.

The Contemporary Music Review is bound to inform lively debate, and I would recommended it particularly to music libraries, but also to anyone keen to follow developments in contemporary music around the world.

Rainer Linz

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